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THE SAUCY JANE, PRIVATEER: Or, THE HUNTING OF OLD IRONSIDES.

A STORY OF THE WAR OF 1812.

BY CAPTAIN FRED. WHITTAKER.

AUTHOR OF "NEMO, KING OF THE TRAMPS," "RED RUDIGER," "THE RUSSIAN SPY," "THE RED RAJAH," "THE IRISH CAPTAIN," "THE MAN IN RED," "DEATH'S HEAD CUIRASSIERS," "PHANTOM KNIGHTS," ETC., ETC.



CONNELL ROARED: "ALL HANDS TO REPEL BOARDERS!"

The Saucy Jane, PRIVATEER;

OR,

The Hunting of Old Ironsides.

A Story of the War of 1812.

BY CAPT. FRED. WHITTAKER,
AUTHOR OF "THE RED RAJAH," "THE MAD
HUSSARS," "THE FOG-DEVILS," "THE
FLYING DUTCHMAN OF 1880," "THE
SEA-CAT," "THE BLACK CUIR-
ASSIERS," "THE MAN IN
RED," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRIVATEERSMAN.

ON the Battery, seventy, odd, years ago, in June, 1812, a crowd of men and boys had gathered, to see a sight that had not been seen in New York since the Revolution; the departure of an American fleet of armed ships, to act against the once-loved, but now execrated "Mother Country," in pursuance of a regular declaration of war.

Out in the bay, in all their bravery of trimly-tautened rigging; yards crossed in mathematically precise rectangles; hulls newly painted, ports open to reveal the lines of frowning guns, lay a squadron of five vessels, soon to become famous in American history.

There was the President, sister ship to the United States, which lay beside her, both as yet untried in war, but fondly believed in by all their officers and seamen, as the perfection of naval skill in construction.

Next to the two big forty-fours, lay the Hornet, soon to become as famous among sloops, as the big ships were among frigates. She had been originally rigged as a brig, but had been recently altered to a ship, with an enormous spread of canvas, and the reputation of being the fastest vessel of her tonnage in any navy.

The Congress, a frigate of the next size below the forty-fours, lay outside of the other vessels, next to the Wasp, a brig that was destined to win for herself as much fame in her way, as any ship that ever floated, by sinking the British brig Frolic, in twenty minutes' sharp, decisive work.

There they all lay, on that bright June day, and the crowd on the shore gazed at them, as if the people would never get tired, for every one knew that those trim, handsome ships, so bright and beautiful to see, would, ere long, be battered by the storms of war, and, if they came back to port at all, would do so with shot-seamed sides and maimed spars and rigging.

It is not easy, at this distance of time, to enter into the feelings with which the people of New York regarded the opening of the war of 1812. We, who look back on it, with the light of history to guide us, can only see the victories with which it abounded, and forget that those victories had not yet been won, and that at the beginning of the war, the reputation of the British navy was that of perfect invincibility, while the little American fleet, much as it is to-day, was wholly untried, and the sneer of the whole world, because it was not built in accordance with British notions.

This feeling found vent in the remarks of the people in the crowd, as they gazed at the vessels in the stream.

"It's all very well to send 'em out; but who's a-goin' to tell how they're a-comin' back!" observed an old sailor, as he turned his quid in his jaw and expected, in answer to an enthusiastic young fellow, who had just been shouting for the American navy. "I don't care a darn fur old John Bull; but I say I knows what I knows; and I knows that he kin fight like a streak, every time he comes up. Them 'ere ships ain't goin' to have sich a fine time as you land-lubbers think. Some of 'em's goin' to get tuck, and more on 'em's goin' to git sunk, and I wouldn't like to ship aboard one of 'em, fur a good deal."

"No one asked you to ship, that I knows of," retorted another sailor, who had not hitherto spoken. "I tried to ship, myself, and they told me they were all full."

"All full," said the first sailor, with a grimace of disbelief. "It's easy to say they're all full, when they've sent fur their crews out o' Borsting, so no one won't know that seamen in this port won't ship with 'em. I say it's a shame to send them ships to sea, to be tuck. They ought to keep 'em at home, to purtect the harbors, as Mr. Madison wants us to do."

"Mr. Madison is a very good President, I make no doubt," here interrupted a tall man, in a sailor's dress, looking the old grumbler in the face, "but he wasn't brought up to the sea as some of us were, and so can't be expected to know how our ships compare with the British frigates. Now I've been aboard of all kinds, and I know what I'm talking about, perhaps as well as any man here."

As he spoke, he turned to the young man who

had expressed himself as having tried to get aboard the fleet, and continued, addressing him directly:

"My friend, what do you say to shipping with me, if you're fond of fighting?"

The speaker was a man of the kind that inspires confidence, for he was well dressed, and dress goes a great way to inspire confidence in the case of a stranger. He had the air and attire of a seafaring man of the better class, at a time when a man's profession was marked by his clothes in a manner that does not now obtain.

The young man who had said he wished to go to sea with the fleet, but had been refused, looked at the speaker rather doubtfully.

"I should like to see a fight with the British," he answered, slowly; "but I don't want to go on anything but a regular vessel-of-war. No offense to you, sir."

The tall stranger laughed.

"No offense to me: none in the world, I assure you: but what do you mean by a regular war-vessel?"

"I mean that I don't care to go in a privateer," was the reply in a low tone; and the young sailor colored slightly as he spoke.

The tall sailor laughed again.

"Not in a privateer? And why not? I can give you a chance in a privateer, such as you could never get in a man-of-war, my friend."

The grumbling old sailor who had set the argument going, here interjected:

"Ay, ay, it's all very well to say privateer, but who's a-goin' to save your neck from the rope at the yard-arm, if the British ketch ye? That's what I want to know?"

"This," was the quiet answer of the tall sailor, as he pulled out from his breast pocket a yellow package, and held it up to the gaze of the two. "That's good for a commission, isn't it?"

The old sailor looked at the square package in silence for a moment, and then retorted: "Not a darned bit of use; and I knows what I knows. They'd take yer darned letter o' marque and tear it up afore yer face, and hang ye, jest fur spite, to show they didn't keer fur it."

The tall sailor put the package back into his pocket and said, in a careless way:

"Very well; if that won't do, I know what will."

"And what's that?" asked the old sea-dog, with the air of an oracle who finds his word disputed.

"The heels of the Saucy Jane," returned the tall man in a tone of great pride, as he pointed out into the bay, where a little schooner was just getting under way to run out of the harbor ahead of the men-of-war. "What do you think of her for a model, boys?"

The attention of the crowd being drawn to the vessel, several voices united in praising her, for she was certainly a beautiful sight as she hoisted her mainsail and jib, and glided off under an air so light that the large ships hardly stirred with all sail set; while the schooner took her departure at a rate of certainly not less than four knots an hour, and speedily outstripped the Hornet, the fastest vessel in the fleet, as they all moved down the bay, followed by the cheers of the multitude on the shore—at least of the landsman part of it.

"Come, boys," pursued the tall man, as the vessels moved off; "I haven't much time to lose, for I've got to catch the Saucy Jane at the Narrows, and it's a long pull there. Who wants to go to sea in a privateer, as fine as ever was built, and come home in six months with a pocket full of chink, and a dozen or more British ships in tow to sell to the Government? I'm Captain Frank Blair, of the Saucy Jane, and I want a few more good hands to help bring home the prizes we're going to take in our trip. Who'll go?"

He looked round at the crowd in a joking way, and the old sailor, who had done so much grumbling, answered in a doubtful sort of voice:

"Well, Cap, if so be it's all right, and you're sure that the navy fellows won't see us privateers imposed on and hung without a trial, I'm darned if I haven't a great mind to go with yer, as the saying is, jest to see the world."

"And you, my friend—why won't you come with us, too?" asked Captain Blair, as he had called himself, to the young man who had said he did not want to go on a privateer. "You won't get such a chance again, I can tell you."

The young man looked at the schooner rather regretfully as she moved off down the bay, and answered again:

"Thank you for your good opinion of me, sir; but I have made up my mind not to go to sea in a privateer. I have been in the navy before, and I should not like the slack discipline that I am told prevails on board of privateers as a class."

Blair looked at him a moment with a peculiar expression, asking:

"Is that your only reason?"

The young man colored slightly as he answered, evasively:

"Is not that enough?"

Blair drew a little closer to him, to reply in a low tone:

"It is enough for most men, but not for me. You have a reason for wishing to go to sea in a navy ship, and I know what it is as well as if you had told me."

The young man smiled faintly at the whisper of the privateersman; but offered no reply; and Blair went on, in the same low tone as before:

"What would you say, if I was to tell you that your best chance to see her, was to go in the Saucy Jane?"

The young man started at the last words, and assuming a haughty air, retorted:

"I don't know what you mean, sir. I'll trouble you to remember that—"

Blair interrupted him in a laughing way, to say:

"My dear fellow, I've nothing to do with it in the world—I know all that, perfectly well, and all that sort of thing; but at the same time I am going to do all I can to get you into the Saucy Jane; for I have met you before."

"If you have, perhaps you can call me by name," replied the young man. "I had an idea that no one in this place knew me."

"No more they do," replied Blair, in his turn. "That's where the wonderful part of it comes in. I know you, Mr. Eaton, though I have not seen you for nearly five years. You were on board the old Constitution when she came home from the Mediterranean, ten years ago, but I don't pretend to remember you from that. I saw you last in Boston Harbor in a calaboo—"

He was stopped by an appealing gesture from the young man, who hurriedly answered, in a tone meant only for Blair's ears:

"For God's sake no more of that. I see you know me better than I thought you did. I am that unhappy son of an unhappy father, whose lines, from his very cradle, have fallen in such hard places. What is it you mean by saying that I am more likely to see her on board of your schooner, than anywhere else?"

Blair smiled as he replied:

"Come and see. I promise you that you shall never be treated on board the Saucy Jane, as you were once treated on the—"

He did not finish, at a second appealing gesture of young Eaton, but went on:

"Well, will you come with me now?"

Harry Eaton seemed to be struggling with himself for a moment, but finally said in a sort of desperate way:

"Yes, it makes but little difference where a man gets killed in these days. I will go with you if you like."

This seemed to be all that the privateersman had been waiting for. The moment that Eaton gave him a satisfactory reply, he took the young man by the arm, and led him off to the water's edge, where a long boat lay at the old wharf of rotten plank that then did duty for the present stone piers of Tweed's memory.

The boat was manned by only two rowers, though there were places for four oars, and a steersman; and Blair remarked to Eaton:

"You see I told you the truth. We were waiting for you and old Tom, here."

"And do you mean that you came on shore on purpose to get him and me?" asked Eaton in some surprise. "You must have sharp eyes to have been able to see us from the stream."

CHAPTER II.

GOING TO SEA.

"Who said I saw you from the stream?" asked Blair, with that spice of malice that marked all his conversation with Eaton. "I didn't, I'm sure. I came ashore to get two men; and I made up my mind that I would take the worst grumblers I could find, so I might not be ashamed to bring them down to what you call discipline, Mr. Eaton. Old Tom, here, and I, are older friends than you would think, to hear him grumble at the work, and the food, and all the rest of it; just as all old sailors do, or ought to do. How's that, Tom Tucker, you old sinner?"

The old sailor who had been such a grumbler on the shore of the Battery, cocked his weather eye at the privateersman, and said, in a way that satisfied Eaton that he and Blair were old friends, "I knows what I knows, Master Frank, and I knows that the Saucy Jane ain't got her equal as floats on the water; but it don't do to let on too much about a wessel, afore the Cap, when he's ashore arter men to list fur a cruise, as is a-goin' to be as dangerous as this here cruise is a-goin' to be. I didn't want to go, and you know that as well as me, Mr. Frank; but now, I'm in fur it, I ain't a-goin' to disgrace the Saucy Jane."

They had taken their places in the boat while they were talking; and Eaton, without being told, had taken the bow-oar, old Tom Tucker pulling the next to him, and Blair taking the helm.

As the old sailor announced his intention not to disgrace the Jane, the captain gave the order:

"Oars! Down! Give way!"

The oars fell into the water as one machine, and Frank Blair said to Eaton, with a smile:

"We don't profess to have man-of-war airs on board the Jane; but we think we do our business as well as a good many men-of-war that I have seen in my day—hey, Eaton?"

Eaton made no reply but a slight smile; at which Blair broke out again:

"Oh, I know what you're thinking of. You are thinking that it's not etiquette for the captain to talk to the hands in that familiar style; and you would be right on a man-of-war, but here, in the Jane, you'll find it different. We are all in the same boat, and interested in the success of the cruise. Give way there, all of you! Don't go to sleep over the oars!"

On glided the boat, to the accompaniment of the regular dip of the oars; and the rowers did not relax their efforts till the bow of the little craft was abreast of the quarter of one of the huge frigates, that towered above the water, with a mountain of black hull and a pyramid of snowy canvas. Here they were hailed, for the first time, as they passed, by one of the officers, of the United States, who looked over the quarter-rail, to ask:

"Boat ahoy! What vessel do you belong to?"

Blair looked up to answer:

"To the Saucy Jane, of New York, going on a cruise after the British, sir. Wish you a very good-day, till we find them, sir."

His answer seemed to amuse the officer: for they could see him smile as he looked down at them; but he controlled his face to say:

"The commodore desires me to say that he feels it his duty to warn you, that he cannot protect you, if you fall into the hands of the British; from the penalties of their maritime laws, unless you keep under the muzzles of his guns all the time."

Blair raised his hat with the utmost politeness, to reply:

"Be kind enough to give the compliments of Captain Frank Blair to the commodore, and say to him, that, while I should be, I am sure, perfectly safe under the muzzles of his guns, at the same time I have a great desire to see the British; and I don't think that they are as likely to come near the squadron, as they are to try to take the Saucy Jane, if they see her all alone. It is my intention to hunt them up for you, and bring them down on you as soon as I can. Does the programme suit you?"

The officer waved his hand, as he replied hurriedly: "Wait a moment, if you please. The commodore is calling to me."

His head disappeared for a moment, to reappear and say to Blair:

"Commodore Rodgers's compliments, and he would like to see you for a moment in his cabin."

The privateersman bowed and answered:

"With pleasure, sir; though I'm sure I don't see what he can want with any one so humble as I am."

The huge vessels were not going more than a mile an hour when the summons came to the boat, and there was no difficulty in boarding the frigate, as her side-ladders had not been taken in yet; showing that some one was on board the vessel who was to be put ashore with some ceremony, and would need the side-ladder, a convenience rather scorned than otherwise, by young and active officers. The privateersman never checked the way of his boat, but caught hold of the end of the side-ladder as it hung, and swung himself up the lofty side of the frigate, with an activity that proved him to be an old hand at the business. As he went over the rail, he called down to the boat:

"Hook onto the chains, and tow, till I come back."

The orders were obeyed, and in less than ten minutes afterward his head came over the rail again, and he came down to the boat, to take his seat in the stern and say in his old jolly way:

"Give way, boys, and make the oars bend! No sneaking, ye lubbers! Make her spin! That's my boys! Give it to her!"

There was something in his cries that reminded Eaton of a whaler, as he hears his prey, and he was right in his conjecture, for it was not a minute ere Blair was talking to himself, in the old style of a whaler's captain, as he gets ready his harpoon to strike:

"Now, my beauties, go it. Put me on his back! Crack the oars, my hearties! Now then, to her again!"

And so on, till the sweat was pouring down the faces of the oarsmen, and Eaton was ready to drop with the unaccustomed toil of rowing at a racing pace, on such a hot day as the 18th of June, 1812.

But Blair seemed never to be happy save when he was at racing speed, and kept it up till the boat at last reached the head of the fleet and the steersman saw, ahead of him, the rounded and raking stern of the Saucy Jane, Privateer. The sight seemed to rouse him to a kind of frenzy of joy and admiration, for he at once began to shout as he sat in the stern:

"Give it to her, boys! What are you sleeping for? Put me aboard the Jane, the saucy, saucy Jane! There isn't another on the sea like her! Put me on board, my hearties! What are you at, old Tom? This isn't a church to go to sleep

in, ye old sinner! Put some soul into the oar, man, give it to him, good!"

The only person he did not rate was Eaton, and that was needless; for the young man was doing his best, and ready to drop with heat and fatigue.

So they dashed on after the little schooner, that kept on her course, under the light cat's-paws that hardly stirred the frigates; and gave them a chase, as Blair had predicted, all the way to the Narrows, before they at last came up with her, and hooked onto the main-chains with the boat-hook.

Even then, the schooner did not haul up into the wind for the boat. She kept on her course as fast as ever, and her commander had to get aboard as best he could, by the aid of a turn of the boat's painter to the main-chains of the vessel.

When at last he stepped on deck, he turned to Eaton, and said, with a courteous wave of the hand:

"Mr. Eaton, welcome to the Saucy Jane."

CHAPTER III.

THE SAUCY JANE.

EATON was a little surprised at the tone of courtesy with which the privateersman addressed him, after he had boarded the schooner.

He would not have been surprised at rudeness or brutality, for that was what he had expected. A sea-captain on shore and the same man at sea, are two very different persons.

But here, as soon as he stepped on the deck of a vessel, in which he had just shipped in a fit of desperation, without stipulation, as a foremast hand, he was greeted by the title of "Mr."—one only appropriated to officers—and he felt quite taken aback, till Blair continued:

"Come down to the cabin and sign the articles. I want to say a few words to you."

Eaton hesitated a moment.

"I am not prepared—" he began.

Blair stopped him.

"You're as much prepared as I am," he interrupted. "I am going to sea in a hurry, as much as you are. It's a time for hurry. We are all in a hurry to get at the British, and can't afford to wait for our shore togs to come aboard. You just do as you are told, and sign the ship's book, and I will answer for it that you will never regret it. I tell you I know all about you, and I have been looking for you, ever so long."

Thus urged, Eaton slowly followed Blair into the cabin of the little schooner; and the privateersman carefully closed the door as they entered, and motioned Eaton to a seat, saying:

"Now, Eaton, we are alone, and can talk without listeners. What is the reason you are here, hunting for a place to go before the mast, when I know you to be fit to take charge of any ship in the navy? It isn't the court-martial that is the cause—you needn't tell me that. I know better. What was it sent you aboard the President, to look for a berth, when you knew that you would be recognized and have a hot time, with old Stiffback after you, with a sharp stick, all the while. It doesn't stand to reason that you are doing this sort of thing for nothing, and I want to know what is your object, before we go any further?"

Eaton seemed to be surprised at the acquaintance displayed by the other with his previous history, for he answered, in rather a hesitating way:

"I didn't think that my movements were of sufficient importance to any one to attract such attention as you seem to have given to them, Mr. Blair; but if you know my sad history, you also know that I have been publicly disgraced, and that the only way in which I can ever regain my reputation, is by a deed of such daring that it will be accepted as a reparation for the past."

Blair nodded his head, as he replied:

"I thought that was the thing, and I am not surprised at your wish to get a square chance, after the way in which you were treated. But I don't see why this vessel should not serve as a winner of reputation for you, as well as a man-of-war. You know well enough that a foremast hand on a man-of-war never gets any sort of a chance to distinguish himself."

Eaton sighed heavily as he replied:

"I know that well enough, Mr. Blair; but I could not help hoping that the commodore would, in memory of the past, give me a chance to redeem myself. As you know, I was—"

He seemed unable to finish the sentence; for he stopped, and his breath seemed to be coming husky and thick.

Blair helped him out by saying:

"Yes; I know what you mean. You were dismissed the service to hide the fault of another man; and that man is now a full captain in the navy. I know all that; and all the country knows it, as I do, that the only reason that you were found guilty, and the other man left harmless, was that you were an orphan, so to speak, and the other man the nephew of the Secretary of the Navy. I tell you, Eaton, you're too sensitive by half. No one in the country thinks of you as badly as you do of yourself; and to show you that I at least, do not, I offer you the post of first officer to the Saucy Jane."

Can a man give you a better proof of his confidence than that? Now, sir, your answer, if you please; for, if you refuse, I shall have to put you into the fore-castle with the rest of the men, and it will be your own fault."

Eaton seemed to be very much affected by the offer, for his eyes filled with tears, as he answered:

"Captain Blair, if you really mean it—"

"Of course I mean it," was the reply. "If I didn't, you may be sure I shouldn't make it. I know that you were executive officer of the frigate Chesapeake, in that affair with the English Leopard, and that, if your captain had been half a man, he would have rather let his ship be blown out of the water, than haul down his flag to a vessel of his own force. But it was necessary to save him, because he was the nephew of the Secretary of the Navy; so it was all laid on you. Tell me again, what were the facts on the trial? I have almost forgotten them."

Eaton, in the style of a man who has often told the tale before, began to relate the story of the misfortune that had reduced the once proud and happy officer of the navy to the position of a man ready to ship as a common sailor in any vessel that would take him as an extra hand.

The recital occupied some time, and when it was finished, the privateersman said:

"Mr. Eaton, I shall have perfect confidence in the safety of the Saucy Jane when she is in your charge. Your story does not injure you a whit in my estimation. At the same time, I must warn you that you have a very bitter enemy in the flag captain of the squadron that is now going out of the bay; and that, when I was called into the commodore's cabin just now, it was for the purpose of warning me, in the most friendly way, not to take you on board the schooner."

Eaton looked him straight in the eye.

"If you feel any doubt on the subject, Mr. Blair, I am quite willing that all you have said should go as naught, and to ship as a foremast hand. I have told you that I have no ambition left, except to wipe out the disgrace that has been placed on my name by others; and that can be done in the fore-castle as well as in the cabin."

Blair held out his hand.

"Eaton," he said, "you are the man I had chosen for my first mate, as soon as I heard that war was going to be declared. Do you know why?"

Eaton shook his head silently.

"I said to myself, there is a man who will be ready to do anything to wipe out the past, even to the blowing up of his vessel, if he can escape capture in no other way; and that is the man I want," the privateersman replied, with a look of meaning on his face. "Don't think that you will have an easy time on board the Jane, for you won't. I've shown you already how I drive my people; and that is the way everything is done on the Saucy Jane, as you will find very soon. I expect you to be like myself, a relentless pursuer of the British, wherever you meet them, and to be ready to go without sleep or food, so that only you do them all the harm that it is possible."

Eaton's eyes glowed as he grasped his new commander's hand, and he answered firmly:

"That, at least, you can depend on, Mr. Blair. Whatever else my enemies can say, they have never yet impugned my watchfulness. I will answer for it, that you are acquainted with all that is passing on the horizon, as long as I am on deck. As for sleep, I will do without it as long as any man on board the schooner."

Blair rose.

"That is quite satisfactory, Mr. Eaton. I will show you your quarters. You will occupy this cabin with me, and here is your state-room at the forward end."

He showed the young officer a large and handsome state-room, for the size of the vessel, and continued:

"We dress in uniform when we are at sea, and you will find a suit that will fit you, I think. When you are dressed, I will introduce you to your brother officers."

Then he left the cabin with the courtesy of a gentleman who wishes to give his guest a chance to make himself acquainted with the interior of a mansion; and Eaton heard him on deck a few moments later, giving his orders in the jolly tone he always affected, with the result of hurrying the men in the schooner as much as the rowers in the boat had been hurried before.

Eaton entered the state-room to which he had been assigned, and looked round him with great satisfaction. He was a young man who had seen his whole career blasted, by an unjust accusation, five years before, and, for the first time, he began to cherish a hope that life was not altogether done for, with him.

To understand his position we must let the reader into the secret he had communicated to Blair, without the conversation in which the facts had been narrated.

Harry Eaton had been a midshipman in the Constitution in 1804, when she entered on her career of glory at Tripoli, and had risen from

her decks as a lieutenant at twenty two, when he was assigned to the Chesapeake frigate, that was to have a history so different to that of the vessel from which he had graduated at such an early age.

It was his bad fortune to be on the Chesapeake, at the time she met the Leopard, of the English service, outside Cape Henry, when the English frigate, in time of peace, had fired into the utterly unprepared ship, and compelled her surrender, without a chance to fire a shot till resistance was useless. He had been held responsible, at the court-martial which had been ordered, after the Chesapeake had been given up, for the fact that the vessel had been lumbered up with loose baggage of passengers and temporary pantries, having just come out of port. As a matter of fact, he had protested against going to sea with any such lumber on board, and had fired, with his own hand, a coal from the galley, the only gun that was fired from the unhappy ship, when she was so ignominiously taken and searched by the haughty British captain, for the deserters that he claimed to know were on board the Chesapeake. He was a junior officer, and his captain was the nephew of the then Secretary of the Navy. It was necessary to find a victim to appease popular wrath, and the lieutenant was dismissed, while the captain was only reprimanded. Ever since that day, poor Eaton had been a disgraced man in his own eyes, till the declaration of war roused in him the hope that, by enlisting before the mast, in one of the vessels going to sea, he might be enabled to redeem himself by some deed of daring.

But alas! When he went on board the President to offer himself as a foremast hand, he had been met with the news that the ship was "all full," at the same time that he knew, from a certain look in the eye of the officer of the deck, to whom he had made his humble petition, that he had been recognized, in spite of the lapse of time, and that the real reason they would not take him was that they did not want to offend the powers that were in Washington.

It was while musing bitterly over his ill fortune, and looking at the ships in the harbor, as we have seen, that he had met Blair, with the result we have chronicled.

"A chance at last," he soliloquized, as he attired himself in the loose uniform of blue cloth laid out in the cabin. "A chance at last, and a good one. I feel like a new man. Ah, Lily, if you only knew it! But you shall, you shall! And when I have wiped off that stain he put on me—then, then, Lily, then I can claim you, without asking your, or your father's, oblivion of the past."

From which soliloquy it was pretty clear that the young officer, in addition to his other troubles, was in love with a young lady of the euphonious name of Lily, surname unknown.

But the new first mate of the Saucy Jane was not too much in love to attend to his surroundings, and those which he saw on the face of the cabin told him that he was in a vessel of very fine lines and great probable speed.

The main cabin was narrow at the extreme stern, but quite wide at the part occupied by his own quarters. The fittings of everything were in fine woods, such as mahogany and rosewood, while the metal work was kept as bright as silver, though only of brass.

The heel of the mainmast stood in the midst of the cabin, near the door, and was of remarkable size for a vessel of the Saucy Jane's tonnage, as thick as the mast of a vessel of twice her carrying capacity.

That was as much as he could see or judge of the vessel from the cabin; but when he went on deck, to be introduced to his brother officers, as Blair had promised him, he was struck with the fact that the vessel was one of the very handsomest models he had ever seen, for speed in light winds. Her bows were as sharp as a knife, and the slope of her wedge-like entrance was extended all the way to the foot of the mainmast. This gave her a great breadth of beam, in spite of her leanness forward, and gave room also for a large gun that stood on the main-deck, just before the mainmast, on a carriage that was then seldom used, giving a fire to the piece in every direction, even ahead and astern, by slewing the gun to one side or other of the mainmast.

"Welcome to the Saucy Jane once more," said Blair, coming up to him as soon as he stepped on deck. "Gentlemen, Mr. Eaton, my new first officer, and a good seaman, as you can see with half an eye, if you are as sharp as I am to tell a sailor. Ha, Mr. Folger, what say you?"

Then, without waiting for an answer to his question, he proceeded, in his rapid, nervous style:

"Gentlemen, Mr. Eaton, Mr. Folger, Mr. Hackett. I hope you will all be good comrades on shore, and shipmates at sea, and remember that the Saucy Jane is never to strike her flag to anything that floats, except it be a petticoat. How's that, Hackett?"

Eaton looked at his new shipmates, and thought to himself, that he should get along with them very well; if they were not very polished in their general appearance. They

had the look of whalers, and their names had the true Nantucket flavor about them.

Folger, the second mate, was a long Yankee, and Hackett, the third, was a short one; that was all the difference between them.

Both were thin to emaciation; and both were clean-shaven, save for a tuft of hair under the chin. Both chewed tobacco; and both had a habit of going to the side of the vessel at every pause of the conversation, to expectorate.

One thing was pretty certain, to his mind, that neither of the two was what is called a navigator. They had the look of good seamen, and that was all. There is something in the mental discipline that comes of good instruction in mathematics, that produces a certain refinement of speech, if not of face, that was not in any way visible in the faces of either Folger or Hackett; though both had the air of being what is called "good fellows." Both looked rather uncomfortable in their new uniforms, similar to the one Eaton had found in his cabin; and both were given to forgetting where they were and almost spitting on the snowy deck of the trim little schooner; and then, with an apologetic look and a mouthful of tobacco-juice, hurrying away to the lee rail to deposit their burden in the deep.

From the contemplation of his shipmates the young man next turned his attention to the crew that were gathered forward in the fore-castle. He saw there a set of men that seemed to be all native Americans. To a native, there is no mistake about that, when he sees it.

"You seem to have all of your men from our own country, captain," he remarked, to Blair, as the latter took from his eye the glass he had been scanning the shore with. "I know the faces well."

Blair nodded a little proudly, as he answered:

"Ay, ay, there's no mistake about them, is there? I tell you what it is, Mr. Eaton, I don't propose to go to sea on a cruise that is meant to do as much work as this one, without having men that I can trust; and I can trust a fellow-countryman when I can't trust any of your foreigners. Every one of these men has a home in New England, and more than half of them had a daddy or an uncle in the Revolution. If you can't trust *them*, who the dickens can you trust?"

He interrupted himself to look over the side of the schooner, and shout to the men:

"Why, boys, she's only making four knots, and this is a fine day. What's the matter with you all? Get the fire buckets and souse the sails. I can't have this sort of thing. That's it, my hearties. Give it to her! Make her walk! It's in her, and it's got to come out of her! Souse 'em, boys, souse 'em!"

And, although the vessel was doing her best in the light winds, and far ahead of the rest of the fleet, this inexorable taskmaster set all the men to work to wet the sails, and get another knot out of the Saucy Jane, in going out of New York harbor.

At the time he began to wet the sails, the vessel was nearing the entrance of the outer bay, between Sandy Hook and Coney Island.

From this point, a view was had of the open outside, and when Blair was not giving orders to wet the sails, or do something to increase the speed of the already flying little vessel, he was eagerly gazing out of the opening between the two narrow spits of sand, and sweeping the horizon, to spy, if he could, any sails.

Now that they were getting outside of the bay the wind began to stiffen considerably, and the Saucy Jane put her best foot foremost, as she laid her head to the westward, and buried her nose in the foaming brine, "for all the world" as old Folger observed, "like a toper a-taking his mornin' tod."

CHAPTER IV.

THE FRIGATE.

For some time they saw no sails on the horizon; but as they at last cleared the land entirely and began to rise and fall on the long swells of the open ocean itself, the captain was startled by the cry, from the lips of no less a person than Eaton.

"Sail ho!"

It was the first sound that had come from the mate since he had acknowledged the introductions to Folger and Hackett.

Blair had his glass at his eye in a moment, and was eagerly asking:

"Whereaway, whereaway? I don't see it. Where is it, Eaton? Is it in the offing, or where?"

Eaton came to his side, and pointed out to his impetuous commander the little white speck, which his eye, a remarkably sharp one, had caught sight of, when every one else was looking the other way, in expectation of finding the sails on the usual track of the commerce of those days, along the coast.

Not a sail of the coasters was in sight that day. The wary skippers had heard of the declaration of war, and were sneaking along the bays and estuaries, as quietly as they could, to escape notice from the English cruisers that had been prowling up and down the coast for the last few years, in the hope of picking up a few sailors

that they could swear to be British deserters, and so haul off to swab up decks and do the dirty work of the ship, as impressed men.

Not a coaster was out that day.

But far away on the southern horizon, where the haze made it dimmest, a little white speck was visible, hardly to the naked eye, but quite plain to the glass as a large ship on the port tack in cruising canvas only—that is to say, under her top-sails and jibs, with the courses brailled up.

"That's a Britisher, I'll bet my last dollar," observed Folger, as he went to the side to rid himself of a fresh mouthful of tobacco-juice and his feelings at the same time. "She's a-hangin' on to the coast, a-watchin' fur what she kin git. She's too big fur us, Cap, ain't she?"

He asked the question in a hesitating way, as if he hardly expected to hear the answer in the negative, but at the same time was quite willing to accept it in any form, and leave the consequences in the hands of his commander.

Blair took a long look at the distant stranger, and at last put down the glass with a sigh, saying:

"Yes, Mr. Folger, I'm afraid she is a little too big for us to fight. We can't bring her into port if we *do* tackle her. But I swear I should like to have a little tussle with her."

Here Eaton, who had been silent ever since the first announcement of the sail, quietly interposed:

"Captain Blair, you have a thirty-two pounder there, have you not? I think that the sail out yonder is only a twelve-pounder frigate."

Blair started and turned to Eaton with an eager air.

"What makes you think so?"

"Because I can see the heads of her topsails, and I think I know them," was the reply. "That vessel, if I mistake not, is the Belvidera, of the squadron of Admiral Hotham!"

"What makes you think so?" asked Blair again.

Eaton colored slightly.

"She was one of the consorts of the Leopard," he answered in a hurried way. "I shall never forget those ships, you know; and I remember the peculiar looks of the Belvidera on that day. She had a very narrow head to her topsails, and they said she had been a French prize at one time, and that they had preserved her French rig. That vessel is the Belvidera, and I am willing to stake my life on it, captain."

Blair took another long look at the stranger, and answered:

"I don't know her, and if she is any other vessel, it may be awkward. If she is only a twelve-pounder frigate, it's one thing; but if she turns out to be a twenty-four-pounder, it might not be so pleasant for us, eh, Eaton?"

Eaton took another long look at the stranger through the glass, before he answered again. When he did, it was to say:

"Captain Blair, I am willing to take the responsibility of saying that yonder is the Belvidera, and that she is only a twelve-pounder frigate. You can act on the report or not, as you think fit, sir." Blair shook his head.

"I act on no man's report, if I doubt it, sir. Are you willing to take the responsibility of sailing the schooner into gunshot of that vessel yonder, with the knowledge that, if you have made a mistake, the Saucy Jane will be taken or destroyed?"

He looked at Eaton very earnestly as he asked the question.

The young man returned the gaze as earnestly, and replied:

"I am willing to take the schooner into gunshot of that vessel, and take the risk of having made a mistake. Is that sufficient, sir?"

Blair bowed his head gravely.

"I shall hold you to the responsibility, sir. Take the command."

With that he turned away to his cabin, and disappeared, while Eaton, who was thus left in command of the privateer, laid her head at once toward the distant sail on the southwestern horizon, and ordered every light sail that was left unspread, to be set to the breeze, as the Saucy Jane held her course straight toward a frigate that was big enough to blow her out of the water at a single broadside.

It seemed a hazardous undertaking to every one on board the little schooner. They left the land behind them and lay over to the now fast freshening breeze, as the huge bulk of the big English frigate slowly rose to view, out of the bosom of the ocean, and revealed itself to their gaze.

If the Englishman was only a "twelve-pounder frigate"—that is to say a frigate carrying twelve-pounders as her heaviest ordnance; then was she a most exceedingly under-weighted vessel for her size, as she loomed up, in all her symmetry of tall masts and snowy sails, with her long black hull gleaming in the sun.

Eaton looked round, once or twice, for Blair; but saw nothing of the privateersman, till they were almost within gunshot of the frigate, which still lay idly on the water, not deigning to notice the approach of the little schooner toward her, no doubt taking it for a pilot-boat or fishing-smack.

She was evidently lying in wait, perhaps for them, perhaps for some other vessel out of New York, ready for work, but not in a hurry at all.

Her yards were on the caps as she floated idly on the swells, as if her captain was too lazy to hoist them to the proper place; and she had every appearance of her people being asleep.

As soon as the Saucy Jane came within the distance that Eaton judged to be the carrying power of her long gun, he sent down word to Captain Blair, that "the enemy was within gunshot," and asked for orders.

To his surprise the answer sent to him from the eccentric privateersman was to the effect that:

"Captain Blair sent his compliments and begged that Mr. Eaton would consider himself at liberty to take his own measures; but that he would be held responsible for the result."

As soon as the young officer heard that answer, he replied:

"Very good. Tell Captain Blair that I am going to beat to quarters at once, and attack the enemy."

He gave the answer to Hackett, the third mate, who had been the messenger between him and his commander; and the mate allowed his lean face to assume a look of such extreme astonishment that Eaton could not help a smile as he said to Hackett:

"What's the matter? Don't you like the idea of going to quarters with that fellow?"

Hackett looked down at the deck in a sheepish way, but made no reply, and Eaton continued:

"Yes, sir, we are going to quarters, and going to engage that frigate at once. Tell the captain so with my compliments, and that, if he wants to see the fun, he had better come on deck without delay."

Hackett disappeared with a look of the most extreme astonishment of which he was capable, to execute the order; and Eaton told the tiny boy who officiated as drummer to the Saucy Jane to beat to quarters.

No sooner did the sharp rattle of the drum echo down the breeze, saluting the ears of the sleepy crew of the English cruiser, than a sudden change was observable in the stranger.

His yards rose like magic to the heads of the topmasts, and the courses dropped to the deck and were sheeted home.

Before the last notes had died away, the answering notes of the English drum were heard, and Eaton heard the voice of his captain behind him.

"You've sent him to quarters, by Heavens, Eaton! That's a feather in our cap already. A frigate going to quarters for a bit of a hooker like this. Do as you please. I see you understand your business."

Eaton turned round at the voice, and saw Blair leaning against the top of the little scuttle that covered the entrance to the cabin; a pipe in his mouth, a slight smile curling his lip, as he looked at the English ship.

Blair was a handsome fellow at his worst, and Eaton thought he had never seen such a fine-looking man in his life, as he stood there.

"Shall I turn over the command, sir?" he asked, touching his hat to his commander.

Blair shook his head with a smile.

"No; I want to see if you have forgotten your business. Do as you think best."

By this time the men of the little vessel had gone to their quarters and stood round the long gun, or at their posts by the sheets and hall-yards, as quietly as if they had been drilled on a man-of-war. Eaton looked at them with great satisfaction, for he had not expected such discipline on a privateer, even the Saucy Jane.

"Cast loose the long gun," he ordered, "and load her up!"

The crew of the long gun were evidently well exercised, from the way in which they dashed at their work.

In less than a minute they had cast loose and loaded the long piece, much heavier than the guns in use at that time on board vessels of the size of the Saucy Jane, and had it loaded and pointed toward the stranger.

"Stop a minute," commanded Eaton. "Who is the best shot on board the schooner?"

The captain of the gun, a Yankee of the Folger type, touched his hat to answer:

"Reckon I am myself, sir."

"Can you be sure that you will hit that frigate's foremast right on the heel?" asked Eaton.

The gunner scratched his head doubtfully.

"Don't know if I kin at the first, sir; but I kin try, at least, and no man kin do more, kin he?"

"All right," returned Eaton, "go ahead and do your best, and we will see what it is good for. Take a good aim, and see if you can hit the heel of that foremast."

He turned to the man at the wheel, and ordered the vessel to be thrown into the wind to steady her while the gunner was taking his aim, and omitted no precaution that might help the shot.

The English frigate still lay where they first saw her, with the difference that now her canvas was spread to the wind in sufficient quan-

tity to make her look as if her people were awake. In no other way had she deigned to notice the audacious little schooner that was so boldly approaching her.

Probably her commander had no idea in his head that the little hooker could possibly mean to attack him, under any possible circumstances.

At all events, there he lay, broadside on, the sea gently rocking his ship to and fro, till the gunner of the Saucy Jane had taken a good aim, and the word "Fire!" was followed by the loud and deep boom of a piece that the Englishman had never dreamed of finding in a schooner of a quarter his own size.

Away sped the shot on its way, with a sharp hum, and the captain watched it from the cabin as it went flying off through the air like a distant bee.

Then came a little cloud of spray; another and another, as the shot skimmed over the tops of the waves; its velocity decreased as it neared the vessel.

"A hit, a hit!" cried Blair, with a loud slap of his hand on his thigh. "You hit him that time, Zeke."

Zeke allowed a grim smile of satisfaction to cross his weather-beaten face as he heard the compliment of his captain, and he made reply in a sort of half-bashful, half-boastful way:

"Reckon I did, Cap. Why shouldn't I? I were brung up to it, sence ever I knowed anything. But I didn't hit him on the heel o' the foremast, sir, cause that ain't in the power o' man to do fur certain, every time, sir."

Eaton heard him and laughed at the words of the sailor.

"So you think it's not possible for a man to know every time where his ball's going, do you, Zeke?" he asked. "Well, what do you say if I tell you that I can put the next shot into the heel of that Englishman's foremast?"

Zeke scratched his head.

"Say! I should say that you were a darned sight better shot than I am, or ever hope to be."

"Load the gun again," was Eaton's only reply.

It must not be supposed that, during this short colloquy, though the English frigate has not been mentioned, she was by any means idle. On the contrary, the shot of the little schooner seemed to have roused her from her apathy pretty effectually.

The moment it was received, the vessel seemed to be all alive with men, on the yards and rigging; and the shrill note of the whistle of the English boatswain was distinctly audible as he tumbled up the hands to their work.

Before the echo of the whistle had died away, the Belvidera, as Eaton had declared her to be, opened her whole broadside on the little schooner, with a spitefulness about which there was no mistake. The waves were covered with the flying spray of the shot, as they skimmed over the tops of the crests, and the crew of the Saucy Jane looked at the track of the broadside with great anxiety.

Would it strike?

If it did there was no hope for the schooner. She would be just blown to pieces.

They watched the clouds of spray in dead silence as they came along, and as they approached nearer and nearer, the faces of more than one grew pale.

Eaton, on his part, sprung on the rail of the little vessel, and pointed to the water exultantly, crying:

"See! I told you so, Captain Blair. She is only a twelve-pounder frigate, and not a shot can she make reach us."

Blair made no answer to his first officer, except:

"I told you sir, that I left the Saucy Jane in your charge, and held you responsible for whatever happened, if you made a mistake. Go on and handle the vessel to suit yourself."

Eaton flushed with pleasure at this open praise before the whole crew, and answered with great pride:

"Captain Blair, if ever I do harm to the Saucy Jane, I hope I may be the man to suffer for it. Shall I cripple that ship, sir, or would you like to see me put a shot between wind and water?"

Blair laughed in his reckless way, as he answered:

"Give him a hot one that will kill a few men for him, and show him that the Yankee wasp can sting."

Eaton went to the gun, which was now reloaded, and pointed it very carefully at the English frigate, which was spreading its sails in a cloud, and making for the audacious little schooner as if it meant to eat her up.

It was, to the English captain, a great mortification and surprise to find that the little schooner carried a gun bigger than any in his ship, but he took his measures to reduce the inequality between them as fast as he could, with the skill and resource of an old sailor.

The wind was freshening every moment, and the waves were rising—all of them conditions that were favorable to the large ship and against the little one in a contest of speed.

The schooner, assaulted in her weakest point,

was fain to turn tail and flee. She could not afford to let the frigate get within gunshot of her, with her immense superiority of force. For every shot that the Saucy Jane could fire, the Belvidera could fire twenty; for, though rated as a "Thirty-six gun ship," she, like all of her class, was really a forty gun vessel, with twenty guns and carronades on a side.

So the Saucy Jane turned tail as soon as the English frigate spread her sails and laid her course toward the schooner.

No sooner had she done so, than Blair began to laugh at Eaton for running away, crying:

"Why don't you stand up to him, man? I thought that you were going to put us right on his decks when you started at this little game of brag."

Eaton turned to him with a laugh, as careless as his own, to reply:

"If you are willing to stand the risk, Captain Blair, I am. Say the word, and I will run her under his guns and try to carry him by boarding."

Blair nodded at him, as one well pleased with his reply, but answered:

"No, no, it won't do to send the Saucy Jane to Davy Jones's locker before her time. Let the hoggish Englishman slide for the present. We can catch him another time."

He spoke with all the nonchalance of one who thought that the task he spoke of was an easy one. His reckless humor seemed to delight in the very difficulty and exaggeration of the work.

To Eaton, who, in the desperation of a man to whom danger was merely a promise of reward if it were overcome, was in a mood to enjoy just such a state of things as now surrounded the little privateer, the words of Blair were as balm.

He had been so accustomed of late, ever since his dismissal, to think of himself as a man who was regarded as a coward, that the confidence displayed in him by Blair was particularly grateful.

In the mean time, however, the situation of the Saucy Jane was becoming decidedly critical. The frigate was coming down with the wind on her quarter, at the best point of a square-rigged ship; and the schooner was obliged to run off, wing and wing, at the worst point of a schooner. The wind, moreover, which, to show off the Saucy Jane, required to be light, was getting stronger every minute, and the sea was rising.

Under these circumstances, the large frigate came booming along like a race-horse, the sea foaming round her bows, her great hull passing steadily along, while the little schooner was going up and down the long swells, and laboring heavily, going as fast as ever, but still not as fast as the large ship.

Within twenty minutes, the frigate was within long gunshot of her chase, and beginning to use her bow-chasers, to cripple or sink the saucy little craft, when Blair cried out:

"Courage, my hearties! the game's not up yet, by a long chalk! Here comes the squadron, and if Mr. Bull chooses to keep on the course he is steering now, we shall have the pleasure of seeing him taken into New York in about half an hour."

The words elicited a cheer from the men, who were, some of them, beginning to look as if their nerve was giving way before the peril that menaced them, in spite of the remarkable sailing qualities of their little craft. They looked round them and saw, as Blair had told them, the whole Yankee squadron, under all sail, coming out of the opening between Coney Island and Sandy Hook.

The President was leading the fleet; the United States next; and the little Wasp was running ahead of the whole, her tiny black hull hidden by the clouds of canvas that swelled above it, and evidently trying to head off the big Britisher by getting to the offing before her, so as to engage her, and detain her long enough to enable the large frigates to come up with her.

But the English captain was far too wary to be caught with any such chaff as that.

No sooner did he see the sails of the Americans coming clear of the land, than he hauled his tacks and turned tail in his turn.

The Saucy Jane was too near at the time to venture to follow, for fear of getting under the range of the twelve-pounders, but as soon as the Englishman had increased his distance to that which was necessary to insure the superiority of the thirty-two pounder, Eaton ordered the head of the schooner laid toward the stranger once more.

CHAPTER V. THE CHASE.

AND now ensued a contest of speed and maneuver between the two greatest seafaring nations in the world, in the persons of their representative ships, the English frigate Belvidera, and the Yankee frigates President and United States; the one to escape, the other to catch.

The English vessel had the disadvantage of being handicapped by the presence of the little schooner, that was able to follow her at a safe

distance, to annoy her with the long gun; but the effect of the single shots that the privateer could alone fire, was soon found insufficient to stop the progress of the large and powerful ship, while the roughness of the sea increased so fast that the gun of the Saucy Jane threatened to break loose from the carriage and become a dangerous piece of lumber on board.

It was then that Blair said to his new first mate:

"Mr. Eaton, I think we have done all that the squadron can expect us to do, to-day. This schooner was not built to fight frigates, and I don't propose to have her blown to pieces to oblige Mr. Bull, yonder. I think that the best thing we can do now is to secure the long gun, and haul off from the chase: so as to give them a chance to show whether they can catch the Englishman."

Eaton was by no means loth to obey the order, inasmuch as he had begun to see that the Saucy Jane could do no more than annoy the frigate at her best, with the certainty that, if the squadron left her alone, the big vessel would turn on her and eat her up, so to speak.

The long gun was accordingly secured, and the crew of the privateer left their quarters and confined themselves to the ordinary management of the vessel, as the chase continued.

It was now about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the wind had increased to such a gale that the little schooner was driven to haul down her light topsails and take a reef in her mainsail, to avoid burying in the seas that came roaring after her, while the great frigates did not so much as reduce their usual canvas, but moved along on an even keel, showing the great advantage of mere size in a heavy sea-way.

The wind was blowing from the southwest, and the vessels were all close-hauled on the starboard tack, heading to the south or south-east, toward the Gulf Stream, at an angle sufficient to take them into the track of the West Indian fleet of British merchantmen, after which the squadron had been originally intended to cruise.

The Belvidera was a fast ship under the circumstances in which she found herself, and had the further advantage over the American squadron of having been at sea for so long that she was much lighter than they.

Nevertheless, in an hour after the chase seriously opened, the President, which led the fleet, was near enough to the Belvidera to open on her with her bow guns.

The distance was too great to allow of much accuracy of aim in the state of gunnery in those days, but the very first shot that was fired from the Yankee frigate struck the chase, and produced great commotion on board.

The captain of the Saucy Jane had his glass at his eye at the time it was fired, and he uttered a joyful exclamation.

"Hit again, by Heavens!"

"That shot struck him hard," observed Eaton, who had been watching the chase with his unassisted eye. "I saw the splinters fly from his rudder-post!"

Blair turned to him with a look of some surprise to answer.

"Your eyes are sharper than mine, Eaton. I can't even see what you say, with the glass."

"I was always held to have very good eyes, captain," replied Eaton, rather proudly. "In the Chesapeake they used to say that I could beat any telescope in the vessel; but that was only a story, of course. I think, however, that I can see, with the telescope, as far as any man in the service. That shot struck the chase in the stern-post, and if you look close you will see it for yourself, I think, sir."

Blair took a long look at the chase through the glass, and said:

"I don't know but what you are right, Eaton. There is something the matter with his stern-post. I can see them at work with a sail over the stern, trying to stop a leak, as it seems to me."

"Will you lend me the glass for one moment and I will tell you what it is you really see," replied Eaton. "I think you are mistaken about the sail. Surely they will not give up the fight so soon as all that. No ship can run with a sail under her stern."

"Well, then, what is it, then?" asked Blair, pettishly. "I call myself a pretty good hand with the glass, but you can see more in a minute than I can see in a day."

Eaton took the glass and looked long and earnestly at the chase.

He had extraordinary eyesight, as he said, and could see more than most men with a good glass!

By a careful scrutiny of the British ship, in the light of the summer afternoon, he could note the white mark of a shot-hole in the stern-post of the Belvidera, and see that she had a man slung over the stern, with a carpenter's stage, hard at work at the hole, in spite of the fire of the frigates astern.

While he looked, another shot was fired at the Belvidera from the President, which missed its mark, but sent the spray in a shower over the daring carpenter, who never turned his head, but kept on at his work as if he had not

heard or heeded the ominous whistling of the ball.

Eaton told Blair of the circumstance, and the privateersman said, in a tone of great admiration:

"Ay, ay, they're a good lot, those Britishers, after all said and done. That fellow deserves to save his ship, and I guess he's going to do it, Eaton. I wish they wouldn't behave so well, curse 'em! I owe them a grudge, and I hate to pay it to such fellows as that. Why won't they show the white feather, and give us an excuse to cut them to pieces?"

He seemed to be positively put out by the news that the English carpenter was doing his duty in such a gallant manner.

Eaton saw that, like himself, there was something in the past history of Blair that had inspired in him a great hatred of the British, and that he found it very hard to grant them any credit for any action, however meritorious.

There were a great many men in the war of 1812 who were moved by the same animosity as Eaton and Blair.

Many and many a shipmaster had been ruined by the high-handed proceedings of the English cruisers, in searching American vessels for goods contraband of war, and confiscating whole cargoes on the most frivolous pretexts.

It was not the pecuniary injury alone that produced the peculiar animosity of feeling that marked the whole of this war.

The money loss might have been borne, but the frequent and insulting searches of all classes of ships (even to men-of-war, if the disparity of force rendered the operation a safe one), had wound up American sailors, as a class, to a pitch of exasperation that would, if war had not been declared, have led to filibustering expeditions that would have taken the whole power of the navy to keep down.

So it was that Blair said to Eaton:

"Why won't they give us an excuse to cut them to pieces?"

The man wanted to do it to the Englishmen as a class, but was too fair-minded not to see that there might be good men even on board a British man-of-war.

The chase continued for another hour, the President keeping her lead over the rest of the fleet, and slowly gaining on the Belvidera as the time wore on; and it seemed only a question of time when the British frigate would be compelled to haul down her flag to the superior force that was closing in on her, when a loud explosion on board the President called the attention of the whole squadron to that vessel.

A cloud of smoke hung over her bow, much heavier than usually accompanies the discharge of a gun, and it stayed there so long that Blair exclaimed:

"By Heaven, Eaton, she has burst a gun! See her fall off from the wind! There's a chance for Johnny Bull yet."

It was a fact. In firing the last gun, the President had burst her bow-chaser, and the shot killed or wounded no less than sixteen men, of whom Commodore Rodgers was one.

The accident produced a cessation of the fire for a few minutes, but it was resumed by the British vessel, which opened a brisk cannonade from four guns out of her stern-ports, and struck the President several times, raking her decks.

The night came on with its darkness and a still heavier gale; but by the time the United States, which had at first been left behind, came up close enough to join in the chase; the English ship was invisible, and the squadron, after firing a parting broadside, gave up the attempt to catch the fleet-footed Belvidera, and hauled off the coast.

As this became manifest to Blair, the privateersman was much disgusted.

"I came to sea to find the British, and I found them for the fleet," he said in great dudgeon. "Darn my skin if I do any more hunting for them. Those navy fellows are all of a piece, in all parts of the world. They don't care a darn for a privateer; and they're quite satisfied to let her do all the work and they take the glory and prize-money for it. After this, I don't cruise in company with any men-of-war."

"I think you are not only right, but that if we want to get any prizes, we shall have to go alone wherever we can," said Eaton seriously. "It stands to reason that a man-of-war isn't going to let us interfere between her and prize-money, if she can help herself. My advice—but I forgot—I have no business to be offering it to you without solicitation—"

"No, no, go on and say what you were going to say, Eaton. I know well enough that I am only a sailor, and that you are a man-of-war's man, and I want you to offer your ideas whenever you think I need to have them told me."

"Very well, sir, then I think that we are more likely to fall into the way of prizes if we go off the regular track of the convoys, than if we follow them."

"Why, Eaton, why?"

"Because the squadron is sure to take that way. And I don't think the British are such fools as to do just what we want them to do. That is the way I reason it out, captain. If we want to get the British West Indian fleet, we

must go where it is, and not where we think it ought to be."

"But how the deuce are we to find out where that is?"

"By a little reasoning, captain."

"Expound your reasoning then. I am all attention."

Eaton glanced around him. The crew of the Saucy Jane was all on the *qui vive*, to listen to what was going on, in a style that was decidedly grating to his feelings, as an old man-of-war's-man.

"Don't you think we had better discuss that question in the cabin?" he asked, so coldly that Blair, who saw the reason of his sudden drawing in, smiled and said to him, in a sort of half-whisper:

"I know it, I know it. It's just an outrage to your ideas, and I admit that they would be better off if I gave them a little more navy airs; but, confound it! What can a fellow do? If I come the navy officer over them, they would think I was ashamed of the crew, and I'm not that, by a darned sight. I must manage them in my own way to get my work out of them. But there is no reason why we should not go into the cabin."

So saying, he led the way into the cabin of the Saucy Jane, with a parting order to Mr. Folger to send the hands to supper.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE CABIN.

WHEN the two privateersmen reached the cabin, it was dark enough to have the lamps lighted, and the interior of the little room presented an attractive appearance.

The swinging tell-tale compass, that hung on the ceiling, seemed to be looking down, like a protecting genius; and the table was set for supper, with a decidedly cheerful effect.

Blair took off his cap and threw it on a locker, calling out:

"Here, Cat, Cat, where the deuce are you? Don't you know that we didn't have any dinner to-day, that you want to starve us for supper to-night?"

There was no answer for a minute, and the privateersman repeated the call in a new form: "Come forth, Catiline, thou villainous thief of old Rome! Where the deuce art thou?"

Then a grumbling voice, from the pantry under the companionway, answered, in a deep monotone that told it came from the lungs of a Southern negro:

"Hyar I is, Marse Frank, but I isn't no thief, nor no old rummy nudder, 'n I wants you to stan' dat too. I se a 'speckable gemman, an' comes of a 'speckable family. Dat ar's flat, Marse Frank."

Then out of the steward's pantry came one of the most extraordinary figures that Eaton had ever seen, with all his experience of odd fishes at sea.

Catiline, or "Cat" Blair, as he was known in the privateer, he being the slave of Blair, and brought up in his house from infancy, was a short, stout fellow of intense blackness and polish of skin.

His countenance shone like a newly-blacked boot, and his woolly head was so profusely oiled that the short, kinky curls of his poll were almost as glistening as his face.

His mouth extended a long way on either side of an extravagantly broad nose, and altogether his appearance was decidedly grotesque.

The air of dignity which he constantly affected, added another item to the risibility which he excited, and Eaton could not resist the temptation to laugh, as the pompous little steward bustled into the cabin, talking all the time, and setting the table with a very good supper.

"Dat 'ar war a good chase we had, dis arternoon, Marse Frank," he remarked affably, as he put on the soup. "We're de boys dat kin make ole Johnny Bull hump, ain't we, Marse Frank? Golly, how de fur will fly, when we gets at dem in 'arnest!"

"You shut up your head and attend to your supper, you old Roman thief," retorted his master, good-humoredly, as he began to eat. "What the deuce do you know about chases and sea life, except what I've taught you? Do you think we came down here to listen to your criticisms on nautical affairs, you old ignoramus?"

Catiline straightened himself up with an air of immense dignity, to answer, as proudly as a peacock:

"Yis, sar, 'zackly so, sar. I se allers willin' to gib de gemmen de benefit of my 'sperience, sar. I se 'ben at sea twenty-five year, sar; I done reckon I ought to know, sar. I tinks we ought to go to de Souf, sar, if we wants to git any prizes, sar; yis, sar, dat's what I tinks, sar."

Eaton, to humor the fellow, whom he saw to be a privileged character, interposed:

"Why do you think that, Catiline?"

Catiline's face beamed like a full moon, as he answered:

"Yis, sar; any one kin see, sar, from your pussonal 'pearance, sar, dat you was a reel gemman, sar. I tell you why I tinks so, sar. You see, sar, dat de Britishers, sar, is all out on

de oceans, as it war, permiskous; and when dey hear dat dere is war, sar, naterally dey will all make de tallest kin' ob tracks to de nearest port dat dey kin reach. Den, sar, it is my 'pinion, sar, dat mos' ob dem in de West Injy Islan's will go by de way ob Jamaiky and Porto Rico, 'cause dey is sure to meet de fleets dar, and dey is gwine to stick to de fleets ebery time, sar. It's my 'pinion, sar, dat dis vessel can't do better dan to go to Jamaiky, as soon as de Lord will let her, an' hang about de port to ketch whateber comes out."

Blair winked at Eaton, and asked, with affected gravity:

"But what should we do if the whole British fleet should come out after us, Cat? You know that Jamaica is the head-quarters of the British squadron, don't you? It would be running our heads into a hornets' nest, to go anywhere near Jamaica."

Eaton looked at the black with some interest. The advice was just what he himself was about to give to his commander, when he came downstairs.

He thought he would let Catiline answer the question of Blair, and see if the negro was really as sharp as he seemed to be from his proposition.

Catiline hesitated a moment, and then replied:

"Marse Frank, you knows me well enough, don't you? You knows dat I never put my head into a wap-ness but what I gets de honey ebery time, doesn't I? Yis, sar, dat's what I say, and what I means. If we wants to git de honey, we's got to go whar de honey is, an' dat ain't hyar, by a darn sight; am it, Marse—'Scuse me, Marse, but I hasn't de pleasure ob knowin' your name, sar."

This was said with the sweetest of smiles to Eaton, who replied, with an answering smile:

"Eaton, Cat, Eaton; my name is Eaton."

The intelligence seemed to affect Catiline in a remarkable way, for he forgot what he was saying, and blurted out:

"On! 'fore de Lord, marse, is dat possible? You is de son of ole Marse Eaton dat was de consul at Tripoli when de fleet war dar? Am dat possible?"

Eaton looked at Blair with some surprise.

"How did he know that?"

Blair nodded his head indifferently.

"Ay, ay, Cat knows a good many things that we don't give him credit for. He was with me at Tripoli when we were all made prisoners by the Turks, and it was your father that procured our release."

Eaton sighed slightly.

"Ay, I remember. Poor father! He was always ready to help others; and when the time came for them to help him, they were not ready to return the favor."

He referred to the fate of his father, the unfortunate General Eaton, who had made the war at Tripoli a success by his own influence among the Arab tribes, at the time when the American cause had been in the greatest jeopardy, and had reaped for his reward only neglect and dismissal, when the war had been closed.

Catiline seemed to be greatly excited at the discovery of the son of his old preserver in the new mate of the Saucy Jane, and could not do enough to testify his pleasure at the meeting.

"I t'ought dat you' face war familiar-like, sar, dough I did not 'zactly place you, sar," he said to Eaton with great affability. "I war nine days in de calaboose at Tripoli, and I neber shall forget de day dat you' fader come to de do' and say to us all dat we was free, sar. I done see Marse Frank had got a new fust officer, sar, but I didn't tink dat he would have had de good fortune to meet you, sar. As I was a-sayin', sar, 'bout dat subject dat Marse Frank war talking 'bout—I tink dat, if we want to get de honey, sar, we's got to go whar de bees is wid de stings. It ain't to be got widout de resk, sar."

Eaton turned to his commander and observed:

"There is a great deal of reason in what Catiline says, captain. If we cruise round here, where the rest of the privateers are, we shall run no chance of taking any fat prizes. If we go to Jamaica at once, while yet the news of the war is hardly out, we shall run into a hornets' nest, but we shall also be sure to meet a great many British vessels of all kinds and sizes, from a seventy-four to a heavily loaded merchantman with a cargo of coffee and sugar, to carry into New York and sell for fifty thousand dollars at one sweep."

He named the last sum on purpose to excite the cupidity of Blair, and the privateersman's eyes glistened in spite of himself as he heard the seductive story.

"Fifty thousand dollars at a haul, did you say?" he asked, in a tone of great interest.

"Why not, captain, when coffee and sugar are at their present prices? The risk is great, I acknowledge, but the profit is in proportion to it, if we take any prizes at all in the West Indies. They are bound to be valuable ones."

Blair said nothing for some time, and went on with his dinner as if he had forgotten the whole subject, till after Catiline had served dessert and left the cabin to call the two mates to their supper, when he said in a low tone to Eaton:

"If you want to keep secrets on board the Saucy Jane, don't tell them before Cat there. He's a regular leaky vessel, and every word we say will go out to the crew as soon as he gets his dishes washed. Seriously, you don't mean to say that your advice is to go down to Jamaica at once?"

"That is just my advice, captain, and for the reasons that I have given you, in common with Cat. He seems to be a very intelligent fellow, by the by."

"Yes, Cat knows a thing or two," said Blair indifferently. "He has been allowed a great deal of freedom in my family, and presumes on it to put in his oar when it is not needed in the water."

"But his advice is sound, sir. It is absolutely certain that if we hope to get prizes with this little schooner, we must go where they are to be found in profusion at a risk, and take our chances of escape from the dangers that will, of course, surround us, in exchange for our privileges."

Blair seemed a little uneasy at the advice of his new mate, for he refused to answer anything for some time, and before he had made up his mind what to say, the two mates came down to supper and the conference was over."

Eaton went up on deck and took charge of the vessel, while Blair remained down-stairs, till it was nearly time to change the watch, when Eaton, who was thinking of other things, was startled to hear his commander's voice, close at his elbow, in the silence of the night for it was nearly midnight saying:

"Eaton, you were right and I was wrong. Lay the schooner's head toward the island of Jamaica, and come down into my cabin when you come off watch. I want to talk to you."

Eaton obeyed the injunction when he had been relieved by Folger, and found his queer commander in the cabin, all alone, smoking a pipe of old Dutch manufacture, with a lady's face on the bowl, and a long curved stem.

Blair did not offer to look up when Eaton came in, except to say:

"Take a seat, Mr. Eaton. I will tell you a story in a moment, if you please. I owe it to you, before we sail any further together."

Eaton, surprised at this exordium, only answered:

"Certainly, captain, my time is at your disposal, if you don't mind about losing sleep."

Blair smiled faintly.

"I don't want any man to lose his sleep through me, my dear fellow; but didn't you think it strange that I didn't offer to make any remark about going to the West Indies?"

"I can hardly say I did, captain, since you ask me. I may have thought that you did not think the proposed expedition a prudent one; but that was all."

"You are sure there was nothing else on your mind?" asked Blair, with such earnestness, that Eaton answered hastily:

"Why, no, sir, did you think that there was anything wrong in my mind toward you or the schooner?"

Blair shook his head:

"No, no, I know my men too well, when I choose them in earnest, to make any such mistake as that would imply. What I meant was this:

"Had you no idea of my past life in your head, when you asked me to take this schooner to the West Indies?"

"Why, no, sir," responded Eaton, with still more astonishment. "In the first place, remember that I know nothing of your past life, whatever it may be."

"You are quite sure of that?" interrupted Blair, eagerly.

"Perfectly sure. If I had had any idea that there was anything in the West Indies that was disagreeable to you—"

Blair interrupted him.

"No, no, nothing disagreeable, nothing; but, on the contrary, quite agreeable. That was what made me so unwilling to have you say anything more about it before Cat, who has all the prying capacity of a dozen women, and the blabbing power of a school full of children. No, sir, the fact is that I have very good reasons to go to the West Indies, if I wish; but I was afraid to let my eagerness be seen by the nigger. Cat's a good fellow, but confounded leaky, and I don't want my private affairs all over the schooner, to-morrow."

There was something in the manner of the privateersman that gave Eaton a strange suspicion.

He looked at Blair and asked in a low tone: "Is it anything like my affair, sir, by chance?"

Blair nodded his head, and said, dryly: "Yes, the fools are not all dead yet, Eaton. I have been fool enough to fall in love with an English girl."

Eaton made no remark on the subject, and presently Blair continued:

"Yes, I may as well own it now, before we go any further, Eaton. I am as big a fool as any man in the world on that subject. Her name is Jane and the English call her Lady Jane, because her father is what they call an earl over there. Nearly as hopeless as your

flame, eh, Eaton? You had the grace to fall in love with a Yankee girl, at least; but I must needs go and get into a hobble with a real English aristocrat, and be hanged to me! You've a right to laugh at me, boy, and I don't blame you a bit."

Eaton shook his head seriously.

"I am in no condition to laugh at any one, Captain Blair, about falling in love with any one else, however far above them in worldly position. It is true that I have not, like you, gone to the English aristocracy for my love affairs; but I might as well be in love with an earl's daughter as with the daughter of an American commodore, with my present record in the service. You know that if you know anything about my love affair at all."

Blair nodded again, and replied:

"Ay, ay, old Stiffback is not likely to say a blessing over your wedding for a long time, unless you come home with a pocketfull of cash from the wars, and the reputation of a brave man to back it. But I'm worse off than you, for the more I do to distinguish my name in this war, the more will her father hate me, I'm afraid. You see, the way it came about, was this."

The privateersman hitched his chair a little closer to Eaton's and began his story.

CHAPTER VII.

BLAIR'S STORY.

"It was only about a year ago," began Blair, "that I met her. I was on a fruit trip to the West Indies and I had found that it paid better to go into Kingston, than to stop at the small towns, and pick up a cargo that might rot on my hands before I could get it to a market. I found the Creoles very nice and hospitable to me; but the old country people as haughty as if I had been a beggar in the streets. Positively they wouldn't speak to me, unless I had a regular introduction; and they used to glare at me as if I was a lunatic, when I offered to speak first to a fellow, if I met him in the street. I couldn't get used to it for a long time; but I found out that it was only their cold way, and that, at bottom, they were not all such bad fellows."

"But Lady Jane, where did you meet her?" asked Eaton, with great curiosity. "I too have noticed the coldness of the English; and I am wondering how in the world you managed to get introduced to an English earl's daughter, of all people in the world."

Blair laughed at his companion.

"You may well wonder; but it all came of my nativity I suppose. They say we Yankees have a great deal of impudence, and I must admit that it was impudence that got me my acquaintance with my girl. I call her 'my girl' because she promised to be mine, if I could only get her father's consent; but I've about as much chance of that, I suppose you think, as the devil has of going to Heaven after the last judgment."

Eaton smiled at the homely phrase, but replied:

"I am not offering any opinion till it is asked; and then I want to know all the facts, before I give it. How did you meet the lady, and what were the circumstances under which you began her acquaintance?"

"They were these. I saw her at a ball at the Government House, and heard that she was the Governor's daughter. I swear to you, Eaton, that you never saw such a lovely creature in your life. No, you needn't look at me in that unbelieving way! I mean it, sir. I never saw such a beautiful woman, before or since; no more did you. It's all very well to say that your girl is just as handsome; and I dare say you might think so, but this girl was, and is, a real beauty; and admitted to be the belle of Jamaica, the land of beautiful women."

Eaton was amused at the warmth with which the captain defended his absent lady-love from the possible rivalry of any other girl; especially of the Lily of his, Eaton's affections.

He hastened to set his commander's mind at rest on the subject, by saying, in a soothing way:

"I have no doubt that she is all you represent her to be, sir. For my part I have not fallen in love with a beauty, myself, but I will stake my reputation that my girl has a sweeter temper than any English girl can possibly have; if she comes from the Conqueror himself. That's all I brag about, sir."

Blair looked as if the other had said something that impressed him favorably.

"I reckon you're near about right there, Eaton," he said seriously. "I don't brag much about Jane's temper. The fact is that if she had not a temper of her own, that old curmudgeon of a father of hers would ride right over her, and make her marry the first old John Bull that took his fancy. No; I don't claim that my Jane has an angel's temper. She kin spunk up for herself like a good one when it's necessary, and that is pretty often, with that dad of hers."

"What about him?" asked Eaton. "Is he such a terrible fellow to encounter?"

Blair winked at his companion and answered, as dryly as possible:

"He's a regular terror, that's what *he* is; just spoiled with having everybody bowing down to him, till he has got to think he is a sort of a little God on earth; that's all. He is not what you would call a villain, or anything of that sort, or I wouldn't be wanting him for my father-in-law; but he thinks that all the world must bend to him, and Jane and I don't agree with him."

"And how did you get acquainted with her? You haven't told me that, yet?" said Eaton.

"Oh, yes, I was coming to that when you interrupted me. It was at the Governor's ball that I saw her first and thought her so beautiful, as I said before. Well, you can fancy that I must have had spunk to think of getting introduced to her. I, a mere skipper of a Yankee fruit schooner, to think of getting introduced to the Governor's daughter, and she a Lady Jane, at that! I swear it makes me laugh at my own impudence now, whenever I think of it."

And the privateersman leaned back in his chair and laughed at the recollection.

As soon as his mirth had subsided sufficiently to speak with plainness, he went on:

"I knew that it was no use to try and get acquainted with her by going up to the old fellow they call the master of ceremonies and asking him to take me up. He would have gone to her daddy and asked him, and the old man would have frozen up like an iceberg and said 'No!' like an old brute, as he was."

"What did you do, then?"

"I just made up my mind that I would find out all about the lady that night, and waylay her the next morning when she went out to ride, the way they all do in that hot climate, before sunrise."

"Then you were not introduced to her that night?"

"Yes, I was. Hold on, and listen a bit. I was just beginning to despair of ever getting in a position to speak to such a gorgeous creature, when there was a row at the door, and several women fainted. You see, these Creoles are mighty hot-tempered fellows, and one of them called the other a liar about something or other; and it was less than a minute before there was a regular fight going on by the door, as if the room was turned into a slaughter-house. It wasn't the Englishmen—I'll give 'em that credit—who made the row, but some Spanish fellows, from Porto Rico, that had come in on a man-of-war, and had got to putting on airs over the Englishmen. The row was a big one in less than two minutes, and I saw the Governor coming for the door, near where I was, like an old lion who had had his tail trodden on, and was going to have his revenge right off."

"I saw him go to the fellows that had started the fight, as if he expected to scatter them like chaff; but they did not know him from Adam, and went on worse than ever. The old man got handled pretty roughly, and one of the Spanish fellows got a knife out, in the scrimmage, and made a stab at him, which would have caught him under the fifth rib, if I hadn't seen the man, just in time to get the knife away, and give the Spanisher a sockdologer, right under the jaw. It settled him, and gave me a reputation among the English, as I found afterward, as a boxer. Well, the end of it was, that I got the introduction to the daughter, through that scrape. The old man didn't know who I was; for I had only come into port, the day before; and I knew enough to keep my tongue from betraying me as a Yankee. My name was a help to me, in one way, for the Governor turned out to be a Scotchman; and you know how they stick together. My name is Scotch, and it happened that it was the same as that of an old friend of his; so he insisted that I must be some relative to Mr. Blair of Blair-Gowrie. To make a long story short, I got the introduction, and masqueraded about Jamaica, for three months or more, as a young Scotch gentleman of fortune, who was traveling to see the world. In that capacity I was one of the best men on the island, and had an opportunity, you may be sure, to see all I wanted of Lady Jane. I suppose that I might never have done what I did, if it had been known in the first instance that I was an American; but, as it was, I managed to make such plain sailing, that I won Jane's heart, and she didn't hesitate to tell me so, when I asked her. The trouble began just then, after the prize was won, as far as it could be won, without the old man's consent. Of course I had to tell Jane who I was, after she had accepted me; and I must say that she went on like a lunatic, at first, at the idea of the trick I had played to win her heart. But she cooled down, after a while; and owned that she could not live without me, and that she rather liked my impudence. Then came the trouble with the old man; and the girl behaved like a trump about it; but it was no use. He wouldn't listen to it on any terms, and told me I was a villain, and a base deceiver, and all the rest of it—you know how these old fellows go on, when some other fellow comes after their daughter than the one they have picked out

for her. The Earl of Gowrie—that is his name—was as mad as a bob-tailed bull in fly-time, and no mistake about it. The end of it was, that I was obliged to leave Jamaica without Jane, or even an interview with her, and I have never seen her since."

"And when was this?" asked Eaton, after a pause in the conversation of several minutes, in which he was trying to think of something to say to comfort his commander.

Blair thought a minute.

"It was just a year ago, last March," he said, in a dreamy voice. "It was like a vision of Paradise to me, and now it's all over."

Eaton did not laugh at his raptures. On the contrary, he was as sympathetic as only one lover can be when listening to another, telling about the matter that interests them both.

"Do you think that the lady loves you still, captain?" he asked presently, when Blair looked at him as if he was asking for an opinion on his story.

"I don't know. I think so; I hope so; but I cannot say for certain," answered Blair, in the same dreamy manner as before, as he refilled his pipe, that had gone out during his conversation. "I think she did love me, when I left the Island; but whether she can stand the test of absence is another question. I don't think I have any rival in Jamaica that I need fear; but there is no telling what the old Governor might do, to get me out of her mind, if he took a notion. She may have gone back to England, for all I know."

"Do you think he would be likely to take her away from the seat of his Government?"

"No, I hardly think he would; unless he got a better place. You see, I have one thing in my favor, which is that the Earl of Gowrie is as poor as a church mouse, as the English say. That was the reason he was so civil to me at first, when he thought that I was a rich young Scotchman."

"And why wouldn't a rich young Yankee do as well as a rich young Scotchman, for a husband to a penniless girl?" asked Eaton with some surprise.

"Ah! there is where the Scotch pride comes in. The old sinner would, I verily believe, rather see his daughter dead, than married to a Yankee. Still, I have an idea that if he were to see the tangible proofs of riches, such as could not be equalled by any man in England, in my possession, he might relent enough to give us his blessing, for a consideration. That is the way I hope to work him at last, if I get a chance."

Eaton rose to go.

"We are a pair of very unhappy lovers, captain," he said, with a faint smile, as he held out his hand; "but the fortune of war may yet bring us out of our troubles, with flying colors."

Blair shrugged his shoulders with a rueful look.

"I hope so, for both our sakes," he replied. "In the mean time, Mr. Eaton, put the schooner on her way to Jamaica in the morning; and send her along for all she is worth. Good-night."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EARL OF GOWRIE.

ON a bright and beautiful morning in the following week, the island of Jamaica was basking in the sun of a tropical summer, and the air was quivering with the intense heat of June; when the semaphore telegrapher at the top of the hill which overlooks the port of Kingston, signaled a suspicious sail in sight.

Lord Gowrie, the Governor of Jamaica, a handsome, but hot-tempered-looking gentleman of the school of Pitt and the Tories, was notified of the signal, as soon as the messenger, whose duty it was to watch the semaphore-man, could get to the Government house; and the old gentleman at once got in a passion, according to his wont, and exclaimed:

"What do you mean by that, sir? What do you mean? What sort of a sail is a *suspicious one*?"

The messenger—a stupid, honest fellow, who had no idea but to obey orders—could only stammer and answer:

"I'm sure I don't know, my lord; but that is what the telegraph man says. I don't know what he means, any more than you do."

The old earl growled to himself a little, and at last said:

"Go and tell Captain Ferris I want him."

The messenger disappeared, and was presently followed into the room by a very elaborately dressed officer, in the uniform of an aide-de-camp, who saluted the Governor with profound respect, and inquired in dulcet tones:

"To what do I owe the pleasure of this summons, my lord?"

Lord Gowrie turned in his irritable way to the messenger, and snapped out:

"What the dickens are you waiting for, sir? You are not wanted."

The astonished messenger could only stammer:

"Beg pardon, my lord, but I thought you might have some orders for me."

"None, none," answered the earl more placably.

bly. "That's all, Brown. When I want you, I'll call for you."

The abashed Brown left the room in a subdued manner, and Lord Gowrie continued to Ferris, as soon as the man had disappeared:

"I don't want everybody to know our business, Ferris. Did you see the signal just now?"

"Certainly, my lord. The semaphore-man signaled a suspicious sail in sight—that was all."

"And what does he mean by a 'suspicious sail'? Is it a Frenchman, or what?"

"I think, my lord, that he must mean a Yankee. There are no French cruisers that would dare to poke their noses in these waters."

The earl looked decidedly uneasy.

"A Yankee, do you say? But the war was only declared a week ago; and there has been no time to send any vessels out this way, surely. There must be some mistake, Ferris. Where is the Pomona?"

The Pomona was the frigate that had been on the station for some months; and, the commander of which, was also the senior officer on the West India station, since the departure of Admiral Hotham, who had gone to Europe, the week before, with a large convoy of merchant ships to protect them from the attacks of possible Yankee cruisers, on the lookout for prizes.

"We are all alone on the station till the new squadron comes to us," replied Ferris. "I don't anticipate that this suspicious sail can be anything but a small vessel of some kind, prowling about for prizes. If you like, I will take the Spitfire, and go out to have a look at this fellow, whoever he may be, my lord."

"Ay, ay, do, Ferris," said the earl, with an air of great relief. "The fact is that, I have reason to suspect that a particular Yankee has the impudence to come even here, and make an attempt on the island, to spite me individually; and I should feel easier if I knew that the vessel in sight was not his."

Ferris stared at his chief in some astonishment, as he replied:

"Certainly, my lord; but—pardon me for saying it—no man in his senses would think of making an attempt on a fortified place like this, unless he had something to gain, in proportion to the risk he runs. No single vessel could enter this harbor against our wish; much less do any harm to the town. The batteries would blow him out of the water in five minutes."

"Possibly so, Ferris; but you don't know those Yankees. The fellow I mean is capable of anything in the way of impudence; and I really believe he would not hesitate to run his confounded vessel into this harbor, right under the muzzles of the fort-guns; and blaze away at the Government House, if he took a notion to do it."

Ferris was a new aide-de-camp; or he would not have been as puzzled as he was at the speech of the old Governor.

He had heard vague rumors of a love-affair of the Governor's daughter, in the days before he came to the island; but had attached no importance to them, being himself in the lists with all comers, as regards Lady Jane; and feeling too much confidence in his own powers of attraction to doubt that he could efface any former person from her heart, if he should wish so to do.

So he said, in a way that he tried to make as indifferent as possible:

"I suppose that you mean the man is a madman, my lord. Well, a madman *might* do what you speak of; but no sane man would think of such a thing. Why, we should blow him out of the water if we never fired a shot till he had got his range, as you say, right on the Government House. But this vessel must be in sight from the windows here, if I am not very much mistaken, my lord. Would it not be well to take a look at it with the glass, before doing anything else? I am ready to go out in the Spitfire, and bring it in as a prize; but it may not be necessary at all. It may only be a cruiser of our own, that the semaphore-man may not have recognized at a distance."

The Governor caught at the suggestion eagerly, and speedily had the best glass in the establishment at his eye, to sweep the horizon in search of the suspicious sail, of which the signal had been sent to him.

The old gentleman was not used to the work, and made a poor hand at it; but Ferris was more fortunate.

He took the glass when the Governor gave up the job in despair, and announced that he saw her in a very few minutes.

"It is a schooner," he declared, "under a press of sail, making her way past the island, and apparently not trying to enter this harbor at all. I see nothing suspicious about her, my lord."

"Then what did the man mean by sending word that she was suspicious?" asked the earl, in his irritable way. "I don't see why I should be annoyed by this fellow's mistakes, Ferris. Go and give him a good scolding, and tell him that if it occurs again he will be discharged from his place."

Ferris, who still had the glass at his eye, was about to obey the order when he started and exclaimed:

"Ah! now I see what he means I think, my

lord. The vessel is a suspicious character, after all."

"Why, why, what's the matter now Ferris?"

"I see the reason the telegraph-man calls the stranger suspicious," replied Ferris, as he took the glass from his eye. "He has an English flag flying at his mast-head, and his rig is one that no man ever saw on an English vessel since the flood."

"What is that you are saying about rigs?" asked the old earl impatiently. "I don't know anything about the sea, Ferris. I hate it, except to bathe in, in hot weather; and dread it so much since the terrible tortures I suffered from sickness on my way here that I dare not even apply for a change of government, though I know they would give it to me in a moment, because I dread the voyage away from here so much that I dare not undertake it for my life. As for rigs and sailors, I hate to hear them so much as mentioned since that—"

The old man choked at the recollection of the impudent Yankee who had fooled the whole population of Jamaica so effectually a few years before, and went on at last:

"Tell me what you mean about the stranger, without any of your nautical slang, Ferris, if you can. What makes this vessel suspicious?"

Ferris explained: "This vessel out in the offing—I beg your pardon, I mean in the southern sea, there—is rigged as a schooner of a kind that we never see in England, my lord. She has both her masts with fore-and-aft sails altogether. That is, she has no square sail on her foretopmast! That is an American rig exclusively, my lord."

"As I expected," muttered the old peer, in a low tone. "The scoundrel said he would come back, and he has done so. That was the very vessel he had when he was here last, Ferris. The rascal! the villain! the audacious scamp!"

Ferris, who was an old staff officer, and consequently a very discreet person, said nothing to invite his chief's confidence, aware that he was likely to have it very speedily, if the old gentleman was left to himself.

And Ferris was right; for, in a very few minutes, the earl said:

"Ferris, do you think you can keep a secret?"

Ferris smiled.

"I hope so, my lord."

"Ferris, I have a great deal to tell you," began the old man in a rather shaky voice. "The fact is, Ferris, that my daughter, Lady Jane, is interested in an American—a very handsome fellow, I must admit—but as impudent a rascal as ever was heard of. She met him here, two years ago, and the silly girl fancies herself in love with the fellow yet."

Ferris looked rather unbelieving.

"Indeed, my lord? I should not have fancied her ladyship to be pining with love for any one. She certainly has not that look."

Lord Gowrie nodded his head wisely, as he answered:

"Ay, ay, Ferris, that is because you don't know her well. That girl has the obstinacy of the devil himself, and the slyness of a cat in a dairy, in these matters. She wouldn't give in to me on the subject, and wouldn't let any one else guess that she was thinking of him; but, all the same, she is, sir, she is. Ferris, I want you to do something for me."

"You can command me, at any time, my lord."

"Ferris, I—I want you to find that Yankee and rid me of him. He's a pestilent fellow, and wants to be crushed and beaten down into the earth. Can you do it for me, do you think?"

Ferris bowed in his most respectful way.

"I might have hesitated before, my lord; but now I have no option but to say 'yes,' with all my heart."

"And I tell you what it is, Ferris—"

The old earl hesitated again.

"Well, I may as well be frank with you. I have observed with pleasure that you have been paying a great deal of attention to Lady Jane, and I tell you that you have permission to do all you can to win her affections; but I am afraid you will not make much progress unless you can get rid of this Yankee fellow, Blair."

"Blair?" echoed Ferris in some astonishment. "Why, that is your lordship's family name, is it not?"

The old Scotchman colored slightly.

"Yes, and that is how the scoundrel managed to get into my confidence and make such fools of all of us. His name is the same as mine, and he has the family likeness, confound him!"

"Is he then, by any chance, a relative of yours, my lord?"

"Not that I know of—that is, he must be, I suppose, in some degree, but not in any that you, as an Englishman, would be likely to recognize. We Scotchmen, you know, are more particular, and count to twentieth cousins. But you must not think that because the relationship is acknowledged, we are any more obliged to take in every poor relation we have in the world, than you English are. No, Ferris, the fellow was entitled to be treated as a relative; but only a humble one; and not that, if I had known he was a Yankee. But he came as a

Scotchman, and I believed it, till he told me with his own lips that he had deceived me, and in the same breath had the impudence to ask me for my daughter. Fancy it! MY daughter. My DAUGHTER!! A Yankee, to ask me for her! I declare that, even now, when I think of that fellow's impudence, it makes my gorge rise, and I feel as if it could not be true, that it must be a dream."

"And what did your lordship say to the Yankee, when he asked for her ladyship?" asked Ferris, when the earl had finished.

"Say to him! Say to him! Confound it, sir, I was so paralyzed with surprise at his audacity, that I couldn't speak for a minute; and then the scamp had the further impudence to assert that his request was authorized by my daughter."

"And was it?" asked Ferris, in a low voice.

The old nobleman stammered and hesitated a moment.

"Well, I—I don't remember exactly—it's so long ago, and Jane was so young then. I—I am not sure but it was true in a sense, and that some sort of contract had been entered into between them, in an informal fashion. But you know we are not in Scotland, where the state of the marriage is a scandal; but in Jamaica, where I am absolute under the crown, and where no one can get married without my leave. Yes, I believe there was some idea on Jane's part that she would die without him, and all that sort of thing; but you see how little it has affected her. I am satisfied that if we can keep this fellow from taking advantage of the present war to thrust himself before her eyes as a hero, and keep him out of her sight, she will listen to reason and do as I wish her, instead of going her own foolish way."

"I think, my lord," observed Ferris thoughtfully, "that you are right, and that it will be policy to get rid of this Yankee as soon as we can, to prevent his making his appearance in the light of a hero, even as a prisoner. I have known great havoc done in staid English households, by the French prisoners from Spain; and Yankees may be just as dangerous. On the whole, I think that if we ever catch this particular Yankee, we should do well to have him shot at once as a traitor to the king, just as if the old rebellion were still in operation."

The old earl's eyes glistened for a moment, but he shook his head sorrowfully.

"No, no, Ferris; that won't do. I wish it would. I could sleep more soundly at night if that could be done. But it's no use, and you know it as well as I do. We've got to treat this Yankee, if we ever meet him in war, as civilly as if he were a Frenchman or a Spaniard; unless he gets killed in action."

"That is by no means a difficult thing to procure," said Ferris coldly. "I have seen many a man killed in action, who never knew what hit him; and if this Blair goes into war, he, of course, expects to take its chances."

"Do you think that you could make sure of the scoundrel?" asked Lord Gowrie eagerly.

"I feel so sure of it," replied the aide-de-camp, "that I am willing to stake my success with Lady Jane on the issue. If I don't kill him when I meet him, it will only be because I get no chance to get near him."

"That will do just as well," interrupted Gowrie hurriedly. "I don't want to murder the man, if he will only keep away from my daughter; but, rather than see her run away with him, I believe I would take the responsibility of ordering his execution, if he was taken prisoner and brought in here."

"That can be done, too," replied Ferris quietly. "It is not to be supposed that the Yankees are going to do much fighting with his majesty's ships, when they get at them fairly. We shall be likely to have plenty of prisoners, in a very short time, when the new squadron comes in, and there will be no particular inquiry if a few more or less prisoners are found to answer to their names, at a certain roll-call. If he ever comes in this direction, my lord, you may be sure I will do my best to catch him."

"But suppose he doesn't come on shore?" inquired the earl, in a doubtful way.

"Then we must entice him on shore," was the quiet reply. "If it is necessary to catch that man, my lord, and he comes into this neighborhood, I shall I will catch him somehow. Of course if he keeps away, no one wants to hurt him; but if he comes here, he will put his head into the lion's mouth, and must take the consequences."

Saying, the aide-de-camp saluted his chief, and left the room with the remark:

"I will be sure I am right before I do anything, my lord."

Then he went away, and the old Earl of Gowrie was left to his own reflections, (not over pleasant ones), at the prospect of seeing his willful daughter in a fresh scandal, that must end in making the name of Gowrie a theme for fun in Yankee papers, and in the organs of the no less offensive Whig opposition, at home.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GALLEY.

WHILE the most noble Earl of Gowrie was thus hatching plots to catch the audacious

Yankee, whose vessel he had rightly divined to be the one now approaching the island, on board the Saucy Jane herself, a lively discussion was going on, between the captain and the first mate, as to whether the island was defended by any ships-of-war.

The strength of the English West India squadron was known to be great, and it contained many fine vessels; but whether it had a ship or smaller craft, swift enough to catch the Saucy Jane, was the problem yet to be solved; and they were going to work to solve it in the audacious way peculiar to a Yankee seaman, by taking the chances of capture or escape at once, and braving the whole power of the British, in front of Kingston, at a time when the danger was greatest.

The keen eyes of Eaton soon discovered that they had attracted notice from the shore; for the semaphore arms could be seen waving wildly to and fro, as the little schooner advanced toward the port, and aired her British flag, in plain sight of the town, as if to pretend friendship.

"I don't see much use in flying that piece of bunting," said Eaton, as they came right in front of the water batteries of Kingston, and saw, through the glass, that the guns were all manned. "Those fellows know we have no right to fly it, and it may get us into a scrape about sailing under false colors."

Blair laughed at him.

"Your men-of-war scruples are of no account with a privateer, Eaton. They don't expect us to fight according to rules; and if they did, they would find themselves most confoundedly mistaken."

"For all that, Captain Blair, I think it may as well be hauled down. I don't like to sail under it, and it is a bad flag for a Yankee to fight under."

"Take her down, then," replied Blair, indifferently. "I have no particular love for it, I assure you."

So the flag came down while the schooner was yet in full sight of the water-batteries of Kingston, and the stars and stripes went up to the peak of the Saucy Jane's mainsail, with a defiant wave, as if the little vessel were taunting the whole power of England to do her any harm; though, at the time it went up, no one on board the Saucy Jane knew for certain but what a squadron of men-of-war lay in the harbor, hidden by the projections of the coast.

No sooner had the flag risen to the peak, than a gun was fired from the water battery below the Government House; and the shot came skimming along the water toward the little schooner, shaving her stern so closely that the captain exclaimed:

"By Heavens, Eaton, John Bull is improving in his gunnery. When I was here last, they could not have done that to save their souls."

"It is a hint to us to keep off," observed Eaton, "and it is also a revelation to me, captain, that there are no men-of-war in the harbor, that they can trust to come out after us. If they had, we should have seen them long ago."

"What's that, then?" asked Blair, as the bow of a long, low craft, something between a boat and a sailing vessel, poked itself out from behind the end of the pier, and came stealing to sea after the little schooner. "She looks as if she wanted to scrape a close acquaintance with us, this morning."

Eaton looked at the strange craft, and his face assumed a serious expression.

"That is a galley, and a dangerous craft she is too, in a calm, to a vessel that cannot pull sweeps, captain. If we were a little closer inshore, I should feel decidedly uneasy about her. As it is, I think we can manage her, if we get out of shot of the batteries before we bring her to action."

Even as he spoke, a second shot came whizzing from the water-battery and passed between the masts of the schooner, with a dangerous sound that warned them that they had not long to make up their minds about going; but must go at once if they hoped to save the schooner from an early grave in Kingston Bay.

The wind was light, and came in unsteady puffs, but the little schooner, at her best in just such weather, wore round on her heel and stood off the land, before the battery fairly got the range on her.

She was enabled to do this the more easily, that the Englishmen, in their eagerness to cripple the audacious Yankee, had begun their fire at long range, where a smooth bore gun is notoriously uncertain, and it did not cost the Saucy Jane more than a quarter of a mile's sailing to get out of the range entirely.

As soon as this was accomplished, Blair said to Eaton, to whom he looked for advice in all war-like emergencies, with a confidence born of the latter's education as a navy officer:

"Well, what shall we do next, Eaton? It is true that I am skipper of this craft, but you are an old man-of-war's-man, and you know what to do, better than I. What is your advice?"

Eaton paused a long while before he made any answer. He was looking at the galley, that was still coming toward the schooner with long regular sweeps of her huge oars, and making about four knots an hour.

"I think we had better sink that fellow before we do anything else, captain," he said, at last. "He is going to give us trouble, if we don't look out sharp for him."

Blair looked at the galley, and a smile of some contempt crossed his face, as he said:

"Surely that fellow can't do us any harm. We can run away from him, with our sweeps alone, I believe."

"Don't be too sure, captain. I remember that we had more trouble, before Tripoli, with the galleys of the Arabs, than with all the regular war-vessels that they could bring against us. The larger vessels we could bring to action on even terms, when we met them; but the galleys never fought us except in a dead calm; when they had all the advantage, and we could not so much as bring a broadside to bear, except at a disadvantage. Those galleys were manned by Arabs; these are full of Englishmen; and that is what gives us a chance to sink her."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean that the Arabs had no sense of honor or renown to spur them into danger, and so took no chances, but, on the other hand, did not fight like Englishmen; but these fellows are likely to think they can lick us, and try it on, so as to give us a chance to whip them."

"Well reasoned, Eaton. What do you propose to do, then?"

"Open the action with the galley by firing at her, and see if we can't coax her into coming out of the protection of the water batteries. If we can get her out to sea, where there is a little breeze, we can just wipe her out of existence, as easily as she could return the compliment for us, if she caught us in a dead calm."

As he spoke, the galley, that had hitherto been rowing straight toward them, stopped her oars and rested idly on the water.

"I told you so," observed the young mate of the Saucy Jane. "He is beginning to be scared already, and to think of the traditions of galley service. Now to coax him on."

He turned to the little drummer.

"Beat to quarters as loud as you can, young fellow," he said. "That is, with your permission, Captain Blair," he added, with a look of inquiry at his commander.

Blair nodded to the boy, and the loud notes of the drum soon echoed through the bay, as the men of the Saucy Jane went to quarters, with a cheerful alacrity that was in strong contrast to the way in which they had performed the same operation a week before, when they met the British frigate that had given the American squadron such a long and well-contested chase.

Since that time the crew of the Saucy Jane had been exercised at the guns every day, in regular style, so that the privateer was as well drilled, as regards her crew, as any of the navy vessels that had gone out of New York harbor, at the same time with her.

No sooner had the first notes of the drum pealed over the water, than the galley turned her head toward the schooner, as much as to say that she was ready to tackle anything of her size that floated.

"I knew that would stop him," said Eaton, with some pleasure to see his prediction verified. "The English are not like the Turks. They will fight an open battle as well as any man, and that fellow is going to fight us the best he knows how."

The course of the schooner was changed to meet the galley, and both vessels approached each other in the hot June sunlight of Jamaica, in a light breeze that hardly ruffled the water.

CHAPTER X.

THE FIGHT.

THE galley now approaching the Saucy Jane was commanded by no less a person than Captain Ferris, aide-de-camp to the Governor of the island of Jamaica, and a very great person, in his own estimation.

Ferris had been a midshipman in his early youth; but had left the navy in disgust, when he came into a fortune, left him by a relative who had been in the East India Company's service, at a time when easy wealth was nowhere so certain as in India. Then Ferris, recognizing the fact that there no soft places in any navy, compared to what can be found in the army, left a service where he had found nothing but hard work, and bought a commission, in the good old times when a rich man could purchase a captaincy in a very few years.

This he had done in due course of time, and had obtained an appointment on the staff of Lord Gowrie, with the more ease that the canny old Scotch nobleman was on the lookout for rich aides all the time; and his inclinations that way were well known.

Ferris, on the other hand, had come to the island, not by any means unwilling to be captivated by Lady Jane Blair, though she had the reputation of having a sharp tongue.

The fact was that, Ferris had found, as many others have found in English aristocratic society, that the mere possession of wealth was not enough to secure him the universal adulation that he deemed to be his due, and had made up

his mind to try what a wife with a title would do, toward removing the cold lack of appreciation shown to his many merits.

That is how Ferris came to be in the island of Jamaica, and how he came to be so familiar with the nautical peculiarities of the schooner that had excited such curiosity and distrust in Kingston.

In his double capacity of aide-de-camp to the Governor, and ex-naval officer, he had taken the command of the galley that was now approaching the Saucy Jane, and had made up his mind on the programme he was going to play, in the act shortly to be performed.

As he approached her, and saw with what ease the little vessel made her way through the water a spasm of prudence caused him to come to a stop, as he drew out of the lee of the land, and found that there was enough wind to roll the crank galley about a good deal, in the long ground swell.

He realized that the schooner would have the advantage in a sea, and that, if he went out much further, he might be unable to fight his guns, on account of the rolling of the galley.

It was at this time that the schooner went to quarters, and the fiery officer, hearing the sound of the drum, immediately made up his mind that the dignity of the flag required that he should accept the challenge thrown out by the stranger, and advance to meet her at once.

The second in command of the galley, an old man-of-war's-man, who had seen service in the Mediterranean, but who had never held a place higher than a warrant-officer and was consequently rather timid about offering his opinion before it was asked, fidgeted, and said in a respectful way to his superior:

"Ahem! If your honor pleases—"

"Well, Briggs, what is it?" asked Ferris, in the peculiar insolent drawl of an Englishman who wishes to repel what he considers an impertinent interference.

"I think, sir," said Briggs, hesitating slightly, "as how, if your honor wants to get at that 'ere schooner on our best tack, we had better not go out any further, but fight the bloomin' varmint in smooth water."

"Ah, indeed, is that your opinion?" asked Ferris, in his most offensive tones. "I presume that you think you are far fitter to command than I am, Mr. Briggs; but, as I happen to be the responsible party in the matter, and the one who will get all the blame if anything goes wrong, I'll trouble you to take in the slack of your jaw, and allow me to sail this galley to suit myself."

Briggs turned red and made no answer, though he looked as if he could have said a good deal if he had dared.

He only compressed his lips in a manner that showed what a restraint he was putting on his temper, and touched his hat as he made the usual response:

"Ay, ay, sir."

Ferris, satisfied at the triumph, and willing to hear what Briggs might have to say on the subject of the enemy (as he himself had not been to sea so long that he had forgotten a great deal of what he had once known of naval fighting) said, in a patronizing voice, as the old seaman walked forward:

"Ah! Ahem! Briggs, by the by, why do you think that we had better fight the galley in smooth water?"

Briggs, a little sulky at his former snub, answered stiffly:

"I ain't expected to know, sir, not bein' a commissioned officer. I ax yer honor's pardon fur pokin' in my oar when it warn't wanted, and I won't say nothin' more."

Ferris bit his lips, as he retorted:

"Oh! very well, my man, as you please. I'm not anxious to hear it. I dare say it will keep. Row ahead as fast as you can, boys, and lay us aboard that Yankee yonder. I've promised the Governor to bring her in as a prize before we go back."

The men in the galley were divided into two classes; the rowers and the fighters.

The first were only negroes of the neighboring plantations, pressed into the service and doing it unwillingly, under the threats of the whip if they flinched.

These people were by no means enthusiastic in prospect of the fight that was approaching them so plainly. Their black faces were getting white with fear, and they tugged at the oars in a perfunctory way that showed, as plainly as words could speak, that they did not relish the job before them.

The other part of the company that manned the British vessel was composed of soldiers and marines, who were to do the fighting, and these were full of eagerness to meet the foe at once, expecting an easy victory.

At that time the prestige of the British was at its height, and the names of Nelson and Wellington were in the mouths of everybody, as synonyms of all that was successful and brilliant in warfare.

No wonder, then, that the English soldiers and marines on board the Spitfire galley gave three cheers as they heard the order to row on as fast as possible, and grasped their arms in the expectation of soon standing on the decks of the

strange vessel, in the midst of a crew begging for mercy.

The rowers of the galley did not pull fast enough to suit the fancy of Ferris, and he shouted angrily:

"Lay the whip over their backs, the lazy scoundrels! Make them pull! Put us on board that schooner in ten minutes and I'll give a ten-pound note to the crew to drink my health with."

The promise had its effect on the crew, though not on the black part thereof. The white soldiers and marines, hearing it, began to beat the negro rowers so cruelly, that the poor blacks, in desperation, pulled like madmen, and made the foam fly round the bows of the galley as she glided out to sea.

In ten minutes after the order had been given to close with the enemy at all hazards, the galley was rolling in the long ground swell of the Atlantic, and the skipper of the Saucy Jane was saying to Eaton:

"Isn't it about time we began to speak, Mr. Eaton?"

Eaton shook his head.

"Not yet, captain. Old Commodore Hull used to say that he had never heard a truer saying than that of Napoleon, when the marshals asked him at Austerlitz whether it was not time to open the attack."

"And what was that?"

"He told them *never to interrupt an enemy when he was doing just what they wanted him to do*. That galley is doing just what we want her to do—that is, coming out to sea, where she won't be able to fire steadily, on account of the rolling; and we don't want to stop her till she has got so far that she will not be able to return without being under the muzzles of our guns, all the way home, long enough to sink her."

"What metal do you suppose she carries?" asked Blair, rather anxiously.

"I know what metal is generally carried by vessels of her class."

"And what is that?"

"One long gun—generally a 'twenty-four, or else a big carronade—sometimes a forty-eight and sometimes a sixty-eight."

"Phew! It won't do to let the scamp get too close, will it, Eaton?"

"I hardly think it will, sir; but I think that the galley before us has a carronade."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because, if she had a long gun we should have heard from her some time since. I am pretty sure that she has a big carronade, and is trying to get near us to finish the action by one good shot, or to carry us by boarding. We can't allow her to come close enough to board, or we are gone. They have enough men on that galley to eat us up, without pepper or salt, in ten minutes. No, captain, my advice is to run a little, and coax the galley a little further."

"But if she won't come, what then?"

"That must be the signal for us to open our fire. We may happen to cripple her enough to prevent her escape, and, if not, we are no worse off than if we had engaged her at her own terms."

The requisite orders were given, and the little schooner wore round on her heel and showed her stern to the English galley, with the result, as Eaton had foreseen, of giving the crew of the latter the impression that the Saucy Jane was running away. With one accord the soldiers and marines rose up in the galley and gave three cheers after what they fancied was a fugitive, while the rowers rowed harder than ever, this time not from fear, but from encouragement at the flight of the foe.

Within ten minutes after this the galley was in the open sea, and fully exposed to the long swell of the Atlantic, when Eaton said to his commander:

"Now, sir, I think it is time to turn on this eager gentleman and show him that a Yankee vessel is not afraid of an English one of the same, or anything like the same, force. Put up your helm, Tom, and all hands get ready to jibe the Jane and bring her to her course in a hurry."

The galley was rolling to an extent that rendered her gun perfectly useless, as the saucy privateer turned again and came sweeping down on her opponent.

The men of the English boat, not thinking that there was any possible doubt about the issue of the fight, uttered another cheer, and the marines crowded forward into the bows of the galley in readiness to board.

At that moment the distance was not very great between the two vessels, but the rolling of the galley made her gun useless, while the greater size of the schooner gave her the advantage of a steadier platform, as there was not very much sea on at the time, and only the narrow build and consequent crankiness of the galley made her roll so much. Hardly had the schooner got her head fairly round, when the long gun was sighted and fired by the hands of Eaton himself, and the shot went spinning over the waves toward the galley, and struck it full amidships, raking one line of oars and crippling the enemy, for the moment, so completely, that she stopped rowing perforce, and lay idly on the

waves, as helpless as a log of wood in a mill-race.

The crew of the privateer raised a cheer at the sight, and the Englishmen, with the defiant spirit of the race, answered it with another cheer, as loud as that of the Americans.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRISONERS.

"QUEER taste those fellows must have to cheer at that sort of thing," said Blair, dryly. "Let's give 'em another, since they like that one so well."

The men at the gun worked at the loading as hard as they could, but they were unable to get it done in time to send another shot at the galley before the latter had recovered from the momentary confusion, and the negro rowers were rowing away toward shore as hard as they could make the vessel go.

The schooner pursued; but the galley had the advantage that her path lay right in the wind's eye, and so the rowers gained on the sailing vessel at every foot of space made by both.

By the time the Saucy Jane was ready to fire again, the galley had gained water smooth enough to make a sort of show for her to use her gun, and the crew of the privateer were surprised to hear a shot whizzing between their masts, and to see the smoke of the explosion hanging over the galley, as she rolled to and fro on the swells.

The sound of the shot showed them that Eaton was right in his conjecture that the stranger was armed only with a carronade, for the hum was that of a spent shot, though the distance was not beyond the range of a long twelve-pounder.

The Saucy Jane replied with her long thirty-two pounder, and the shot, as before, struck, when that of the English vessel had missed.

This shot struck the galley in the bow, and knocked a hole through which the water at once began to pour in such quantities that it was seen that the vessel must sink in a few minutes if help were not speedily afforded to her.

No sooner was this plain, than Blair ordered the course of the schooner laid toward the sinking galley, without further ado; and ran up to her just in time to find her whole crew struggling in the water, and to take in almost all of them, except a few of the marines, who had sunk before the Saucy Jane came up to the spot where the Spitfire had sunk, in twenty fathoms of water.

It was something of a risk to take in so many prisoners, when the whole crew of the privateer did not muster more than half of their captives; but Blair never hesitated.

He ordered the schooner laid on her course to help the drowning people, and he took charge of them as fast as they arrived on board, with a politeness that was in strong contrast to the haughty and sullen demeanor of the English men, who seemed to be mortified beyond measure at the easy way in which the little privateer had disposed of them, without receiving a single shot.

Captain Ferris was the first to be recognized by his uniform, and Blair invited him down to the cabin, and required of him his parole not to connive at any attempt to rise on the Americans. The English officer was sullenly indisposed to give any such promise, and answered:

"You cannot expect me to do anything, sir. I am an officer of his majesty, and am bound to do the best I can for him, against all his enemies. I can give no such pledge."

Blair who was now in his element, answered with the utmost politeness:

"My dear sir, I admire your spunk in the matter. I admit that I would not give my parole, any more than you would; and therefore it relieves me of all necessity of apologizing to you, as I was about to do for what will follow."

Then, turning to the men, who had followed him into the cabin, fully armed, in expectation of trouble with the prisoners, he called out:

"Put all the Englishmen in irons at once, and shoot down the first man who makes the slightest resistance."

The signal given, there was a short struggle; as the Englishmen, infuriated at the idea of being put in irons by a foe they had been taught to despise, fought hard for a few moments to overpower the Americans; but the latter, with the sharp decision of the native character, and its remorseless pursuit of its object, in spite of all distractions, began to fire on the Englishmen, who were, for the most part, unarmed, as they had thrown away their arms in their struggle for life in the water.

If they had flinched in the slightest, it is certain that the Britons would have gotten possession of the vessel; but as it was, in less than five minutes, the whole of the crew of the galley was driven below hatches, and Blair remarked:

"Think we managed that pretty well, eh, Eaton? I don't think Johnny Bull will tackle us again in a hurry, without first looking to see whether we have not got a few pistols on board, as well as the long gun amidsthips. And now, my dear fellow, I intend to take command my-

self for a short time, and send you ashore for a message to the Governor."

He said this in the cabin below, in presence of Ferris, who had made no resistance to the ironing, but had submitted to it in indignant silence.

As the privateersman spoke, he kept a sharp look, out of the corner of his eye, at Ferris, who, on his part, was as impassive as a stone. It was Blair's object to find out if he was known at the island, and Ferris's to hide any trace of emotion that might betray such a knowledge to the strange Yankee, till he had found out who he really was. Blair continued, in the same furtive way:

"Yes, I want you to go ashore for me; give my compliments to the Governor; and tell him that I have taken a lot of prisoners, and that I want to exchange them, if he has any American citizens in quod."

Ferris interrupted him:

"We have none yet; but we shall have some, if you stay here a little longer, my friend. The whole squadron will be here in two days at the furthest, and then we can all be exchanged."

Blair turned round on him, with the politeness that he always displayed when he was about to do his most malicious acts, and retorted:

"Much obliged, sir, for the information. Perhaps you will add to your kindness by telling us the exact force of the squadron that is coming to eat us up."

Ferris colored as he answered:

"I am not here to furnish information to the enemy, sir."

"Then I hope you will not endeavor to thrust any more of it on us unsought," said Blair, sharply. "I am about to send this officer to see the Governor with a flag of truce, and I am going to propose an exchange in advance."

Ferris stared.

"An exchange in advance?" echoed he, in tones of great astonishment. "I never heard of such a thing in all my life. What the deuce do you mean?"

"I mean that I am going to propose to the Governor to give you all up at once, on condition that we are credited with a certain number of prisoners, and allowed to take them out, whenever, in the future, any of our men happen to get taken," was the cool reply of Blair, with a wink at Eaton. "I am sure you ought to be the last people in the world to object to that. Here you are in irons, and I intend to keep you there, if the exchange is not made, in the hold; and lock you up, as that Indian fellow did, in the Black Hole in Calcutta, and let you take your chances of living or dying, just as your countrymen did there. How do you like the prospect, most noble sir?"

Ferris eyed him haughtily enough.

"I think, sir, that if your prefer to make a savage of yourself like Surajah Dowlah, you will share his fate. You know what became of him, I suppose. He was shot to death, for violating the laws of civilized warfare, and you will be the same, if you see fit to carry out your infamous and cowardly threat."

Blair laughed outright at the earnest way of the English officer, who fully believed that he meant his threat.

"Well, that is a consideration that I admit I had left out of sight, my friend. I don't want to be shot to death in any way, except in action, and therefore I may not do as I have told you, except as a last resort; if I find you too obstreperous to listen to reason. In that case I must, for my own self protection, do what I can to save myself from the danger that, you must acknowledge, menaces us, as long as your men and yourself are on this schooner, numerically superior to my men, and all ready to rise on us at any moment. If you will give your parole that the men shall not attempt to rise, I can release you from your own irons, and send you ashore to do my message to the Governor yourself."

Ferris hesitated.

"I am afraid," he said presently, "that I couldn't answer for the men, though I could for the English part of them. You see, I have a good deal of Black humanity on board, and much of it is fresh from Africa, and not amenable to anything but blows. It is morally certain that those fellows would rise on you, if they saw half a chance. But you can keep them where you please. I don't care what becomes of them. They are non-combatants, and not liable to exchange. I will give my parole for the rest, and take any message that you may desire to the Governor."

Eaton, who could not, for the life of him, imagine what Blair could be driving at, was surprised to hear the privateersman say, in answer to the offer of Ferris:

"Exactly the very man, of all others, that I should have chosen for my flag of truce. Your name and rank, if you please?"

"Captain Austin Ferris, of the Second Foot Guards, aide-de-camp to Lord Gowrie, Governor of Jamaica," was the proud reply of the Englishman.

Blair's eyes twinkled; but he let no other sign of his satisfaction escape him, as he asked:

"Have you been long on the Island of Jamaica, Captain Ferris?"

"About a year, sir," replied Ferris, coldly.

"Then you know Lord Gowrie well, I presume."

"Pretty well, sir. What of it? I really do not see the object of this sort of talk from a stranger. Have you met the earl yourself?"

Blair had been waiting for this question, and his answer was ready at once.

"Certainly I have. The fact is, I want you to take a private message to him, as well as the official one about the prisoners. Will you oblige me by taking a letter from me to a lady at the Governor's house, and delivering it to her secretly?"

Ferris stared at the Yankee, with such a mixture of amazement and horror at his impudence, that Blair and Eaton could hardly keep their countenances.

As soon as he was able to speak for indignation, he said, fiercely:

"No, sir, no, sir; a thousand times no; such an offer is an insult, that none but an ignorant Yankee would dare to offer a British officer and a prisoner."

Blair affected great astonishment at his answer, and blurted out, with an appearance of some indignation:

"Oh, very well, very well; I can get along without your help, sir. Mr. Eaton can get a chance to deliver the letter on the sly, I am pretty sure."

Eaton, who knew, by his commander's eye, that he was expected to carry on the mystification of the British officer, replied at once:

"Certainly, captain, I'll be sure to give it to her, into her own hands, if the Britishers let us ashore."

"But they won't, they won't," said Ferris, exultantly. "They won't let you ashore, and you can't deliver any of your insulting letters to any one on the island; much less to Lady Jane Blair."

"Lady Jane Blair!" echoed the bearer of the same name, with an appearance of great surprise. "Who is she, for the Lord's sake?"

"She is the Earl of Gowrie's daughter," said Ferris, in a moment of ungaurd.

Blair snapped him up.

"And do you suppose that I meant to send a letter to a lady in her own right?" he asked, as if the idea was too absurd to be entertained. "Why, man, I never saw the lady in all my life; but I was acquainted with a man who was to have been married to her, he told me—his name was Blair—did you ever hear of the man, sir?"

Ferris drew himself up, to reply haughtily:

"Yes, sir, I have heard of an insolent scoundrel of that name, who tried to get into a nobleman's family, on the strength of having the same family name, and had to be kicked out of the house at last, as soon as his true character was discovered."

"Exactly," said Blair himself, with a pleasant smile, "I rather think that the old Governor did threaten to have some kicking done; but concluded after all, that the least said was the soonest mended in that matter. However, that has nothing to do with what I was about to say. The fact is, that this Blair died, about a year ago, and gave me a dying message, to deliver to this lady, if so be she was still alive. You don't object to my having a dead man's letter, sent to the person to whom it is addressed, do you?"

Ferris, whose face had changed considerably during the delivery of this sweet little romance, at once said:

"Oh, no, if that is the case, it is different altogether. Pardon me, sir, but I fancied you, the man, yourself."

Blair laughed aloud, as if the other had said something very funny. "I, Frank Blair? Why, bless your soul, sir, if Frank Blair had heard you call him a scoundrel, I don't think you would have been alive this moment. Frank was always a devil of a fellow with his pistol, and it was a word and a shot with him, all the time. No, no, sir, you can tell Lord Gowrie, that he may rest easy at night hereafter; for that Frank Blair has gone to his long home, and will never come back, as long as the present dispensation lasts."

Ferris appeared to be pleased with the news; for he said:

"You surprise me, sir; but at the same time I must admit that your story is not unpleasing. I am, sure that it will be a great relief to Lord Gowrie, to hear that this man is dead, at last."

"I have no doubt whatever, on the subject," answered Blair, in the driest of tones. "I know a good many people in the world, who would be very much relieved at the news; could they know it. But unfortunately, this time, I cannot let you out to the island, to communicate this piece of intelligence to Lordship, for the simple reason that I have determined to send my mate, Mr. Eaton instead. You might break your word, and stay away, after I let you go ashore; but he is certain to come back. In fact I am going to make you a hostage for his safe return."

Ferris looked decidedly disappointed; but, as it was no use to grumble, he only bowed a sullen assent.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ENVOY.

LORD GOWRIE had watched the conflict between the schooner and galley with sentiments of the keenest interest as long as the English vessel had appeared at all likely to win; and when he witnessed her final and rapid discomfiture, he was so overwhelmed with astonishment and mortification that for a moment he could do nothing but groan unconsciously:

"Sunk! sunk! Good Heavens! how could it have happened?"

The excitement in the port was no less great when they saw the issue of this, the first naval conflict of the war (though it was never recorded, on account of having been merely a privateer's fight.) The soldiers in the batteries, who saw the whole battle from the shore, were particularly struck with the fact of the accuracy of aim displayed by the crew of the Yankee vessel.

In those days the guns of most nations were made round at the top, and the Americans were the first to introduce the sight, cast in the metal of the piece, by which an accurate aim could be taken in any sea-way, instead of the guess-work by which the British guns were for the most part sighted, over a round surface, in which the top was frequently not by any means the middle of the piece.

To sink a vessel by a single shot was a feat in those days as hard to perform as to hit a pigeon a mile off, in these days of long-range rifles. It was possible, but not probable, in nine cases out of ten.

But there was no doubt on the subject.

The galley was sunk, and so rapidly that all her crew had to swim for it, and the people on shore could see them struggling in the water and being taken in by the Yankee schooner, as she came up under all sail, as she had fought.

After most of the drowning people had been picked up, there was a pause of apparent irresolution on the part of the schooner, and then she made a tack toward the town and stood off in plain sight, while she hoisted a signal that no one in the town understood.

The Earl of Gowrie saw it and called to his signal-man to explain it, but without success. It was a red flag, with a white diamond in the field, which no one in the signal service had ever seen used as a signal.

One person there was who could have given a great deal of valuable information on the subject, had she chosen; but that person was Lady Jane Blair, who was sitting in her window watching the whole affair, and who blushed deeply when she saw the signal. But as there was no one to watch Lady Jane, and as she was not a person generally to be questioned with impunity, the information she might have given was never divulged.

The fact was that the red flag was a private signal arranged between her and Blair two years before, and it meant simply:

"I AM COMING."

"It is about time he *did* come," murmured the young lady to herself as she gazed at the brilliant piece of bunting with a kindling cheek. "A woman is generally allowed to change her mind once a week, and here he has been away from me for two long years. If I were not gifted with the true Blair obstinacy, I should have got tired of waiting long ago."

Lady Jane Blair was a very little lady, indeed. Her head was just high enough to reach up to her tall lover's heart, and perhaps that was the reason why she was so fond of him. Little women generally adore tall men.

Her complexion was the true Scotch white, that goes with red hair; and Lady Jane Blair had hair, as undeniably red, as any woman that was ever born north of the Tweed.

But for all that, Lady Jane Blair was a celebrated beauty, and with justice.

Her white and red face was of the delicate fairness that we are accustomed to associate with the idea of angels; and her eyes were of the peculiar dark blue that is so seldom met with, and so irresistible when found.

The redness of her hair was not in any way displeasing. On the contrary, when you saw it, you felt that any other color was faded beside such a glorious golden red as that, and never gave the matter another thought.

The regularity of her features was absolute, and her claims to be a beauty lay on no insecure foundation?

Yet, with all her extreme loveliness there was a something about Lady Jane that kept her from having many lovers.

It was partly the reputation of having had an affair with a Yankee, and partly the possession of the sharpest tongue that was ever bestowed on mortal woman, and that is saying a good deal.

All the men were afraid of Lady Jane's tongue, and with reason. She could say the rudest things with an ease and grace that made people forget how rude they were, though the sting was none the less severe. Especially did she delight in tormenting any man that presumed to come anywhere near her, on courting intent. To them she was so utterly unmerciful

that she had obtained the name, among the aide-de-camps and others, who were able to resist her fascinations, of the "*dame sans misericorde*," or "lady without pity," and well did she deserve it.

Yet it was this haughty beauty that was now gazing out of her window after the distant schooner with wet eyes and flushed cheeks, murmuring to herself:

"Frank, Frank! Back at last! Back at last! Now, farewell to concealment. I will fly with you, if you ask me, for I love you!"

As Lady Jane gazed at the distant schooner, she saw a boat put out from the vessel after she had lain for some time motionless, as if undecided what to do.

The boat looked like a speck on the water, but the young lady had sharp eyes, and saw it pull along the waves, appearing and disappearing, all the time approaching the Government House as straight as an arrow.

She colored deeper than ever as she saw it.

"Surely," she murmured, "he cannot be going to do anything so rash as that. They will take him prisoner, and do him some harm. I must go down and put a stop to this. My father is quite capable of getting rid of Frank, and I am just as determined to marry him as father is that I shall not. There is a spice of romance in all this that suits me, and I like it. I will go down-stairs, at once."

No sooner had she taken the determination than she executed it; for Lady Jane Blair was not the woman to be daunted by any Governor that ever stepped.

She swept down-stairs to the room where she knew that her father was in the habit of sitting in the mornings, and found him there, watching the approach of the American boat through a glass, with so much interest that he did not hear her, until she came close to him, and asked in a playful way:

"Well, papa, what is it that you are looking at so fixedly, this morning? Has anything happened? What was that noise of guns I heard a little while ago?"

The old Scotchman looked at her sharply, and answered her in a hasty and uneasy manner:

"Oh, nothing of importance, my dear. What made you come down? I expect to be busy, this morning, and shall not have time to go out riding with you. Take Somers, or one of the others."

"Thank you for nothing," was the rather haughty reply. "Mr. Somers is such a fool, that he bores me to death. If I must go out, with one of the aide-de-camps, then, give me Ferris. He has brains, if he is conceited."

Lord Gowrie was nonplused.

Ferris had been in command of the galley, and it was by no means certain that he was still alive. If he were, then was he surely a prisoner.

So my lord hesitated and hemmed for a few seconds, and at last made out to say:

"Ah, yes, my dear, exactly; but Ferris is not here this morning. I sent him off on duty, and he has not come back yet."

"What duty did you send him on?" asked Lady Jane, with an appearance of innocence that hid her real malice. "Was it after that American vessel yonder that sunk the galley just now?"

Lord Gowrie colored furiously.

"Jane," he thundered, so angrily that the girl at first thought he was about to strike her. "How dare you speak of a misfortune to your country's vessel, with that levity? Yes, if you wish to know, Captain Ferris was on board the galley, and I fear has gone to a watery grave, like a gallant officer as he is."

"Oh, no," replied Lady Jane, in her coldest and most cutting tones; "Ferris is not drowned, you may be sure of that, while the Yankees were ready to save his life. Didn't I see them from the window, picking up the poor fellows from the water? Ferris is all right; and I should not wonder if the boat, that is coming to the port now, has him aboard, full of excuses, to explain away his failure to bring in the American schooner."

Lord Gowrie frowned at his daughter as sternly as he knew how; but Lady Jane was used to his frowns, and did not mind them in the least. She had come down to be present at the interview that she expected to be going to take place between her father and Blair, and she was not going to budge before she had had her object.

Lord Gowrie frowned; but perceiving that his frown had no effect on his willful daughter, he said:

"Well, Jane, if Captain Ferris is on board that boat, I shall be very glad indeed; but in the mean time it comes from an enemy, and it is not proper that you should be down here when I am receiving a flag of truce. You will oblige me by going to your room, and not coming down till I send for you."

Lady Jane took a seat in a large arm-chair, and replied in her most resolute tones:

"Thank you, but I prefer to stay here. I am interested in knowing what the American can have to say to you. I never saw a flag of truce come in, and I want to see how it is received."

The old earl bit his lips, but he knew he had to submit.

From long experience he had found out that Lady Jane was bound to have her own way, and that it was cheapest in the end to give it to her.

"You can stay then, my dear," he answered, in a resigned way. "I suppose that you will not insist on hearing all that we say."

"As for that, I don't care much about it; but I am going to be present; and if there is anything that is not fit for me to listen to, you had better not say it at all," replied the lady, in her most severe tones. "Surely there can't be anything that I cannot bear, in a communication with an enemy."

"As you please," said Gowrie, shrugging his shoulders; and then he made no further observations on the subject, till the messenger came in to announce that a "boat from the American privateer Emerald was waiting at the wharf, and that the officer in charge had a flag of truce and wished to speak with the Governor of Jamaica about an exchange of prisoners."

"Send him in," was Lord Gowrie's first impulse; and then he checked it to add:

"No—no; I mean, did you find out what was his name?"

"Yes, my lord. He says his name is Eaton."

Lady Jane gave a slight start, and murmured to herself:

"Eaton—Eaton! Is it possible that he has *not* come himself?"

The old earl had expected to hear the hated and feared name of Blair; and he was proportionately relieved at the strange appellation that met his ears.

"Eaton did you say, Brown? Are you sure that you have made no mistake about it?"

"Certain, my lord. That was the name the gentleman gave me."

"Very well then, Brown, send him up at once, and have some sherry and biscuits ready when I ring. We don't want to be stingy, and let the Yankee go home and tell his friends that the Governor of Jamaica couldn't afford to give him a drop to drink when he came ashore with a flag of truce."

"Very good, my lord."

Brown backed out of the room, and the old earl and his daughter waited in silence for the coming of the American envoy, with feelings that differed widely.

Lady Jane did not know whether to be disappointed, or to hope, on account of the absence of her lover, while the earl was too much relieved at the idea that he should not have to encounter the dreaded Blair, that he did not much care who else might come.

The young lady, with the true secretive instinct of her sex, took a chair in a place where she could see all that was to pass in the interview, and yet keep her own face hidden from view.

Lord Gowrie, on the other hand, paced up and down the room, while he was waiting for the messenger, and displayed decided impatience.

Presently the footsteps of the returning messenger were heard, and he entered the room, preceding a young officer, who wore a sort of half-naval uniform, that made him look very handsome.

This young gentleman was evidently used to the actions of good society, from the way in which he bowed to Lord Gowrie, as he came in: not showing either embarrassment or undue stiffness, as he saluted; but treating the old man with the respect due to his age.

Lord Gowrie advanced to meet him in his most imposing manner.

"Ah, Mr. Eaton I believe? I can hardly say that I am happy to see you, sir, on an occasion of this sort; but I am glad that the enemy have chosen a gentleman of such pleasing personal appearance to do the necessary business. I was brought up among gentlemen, and I confess to a prejudice in their favor."

Eaton smiled at the open flattery of the old man, and made his reply in a sort of jesting tone:

"I, on the contrary, am charmed to meet your lordship; for I come to make an arrangement that will, I trust, be satisfactory to us both. My lord, you are aware that we have just taken a galley of your navy, and have a great many prisoners?"

The earl bowed stiffly.

"Yes, sir, I am aware of that. It was an unexpected misfortune; but one of those of which war is full. You have come, as I understand, to propose an exchange of prisoners."

"I have, my lord, to make negotiations that may be mutually advantageous."

"Ah, yes, yes, and what may be your idea of a fair exchange?"

"I came to offer your lordship a proposition that will, I think, meet both our wishes. You have no prisoners to exchange with us; but you may have some, before long. My proposal is that, we put all your men on shore at once, and that they be paroled, not to serve against the United States, till fairly exchanged; but in the mean time to have the privilege of staying at home in Jamaica. Is not that a fair proposition?"

CHAPTER XIII.

A SHARP NEGOTIATOR.

The earl looked astonished at the terms.

"But to do that would be to put them all out of the fight for the rest of the war, sir. You must be aware that, in less than two days, we expect the new squadron here, which will render it impossible for you to stay. In that case, you will have to take your prisoners to the United States, or lose them, and the chances are ten to one that you will lose them, and be captured yourself, on the way to your own country."

Eaton listened to him quietly; but he had not allowed his eyes to remain so quiet. They were roaming about the apartment, and had dropped on Lady Jane, who was sitting in the back of the room, with her back to the envoy, but with a little mirror in one hand, of which he caught a glimpse, and which convinced him that she was the object of his search.

While he was casting about in his mind for a way of communicating with her, the lady herself turned her face his way, for an instant, and fairly struck him dumb with her extraordinary beauty, so that he stammered and hesitated, when the earl addressed him again.

"You must see, Mr. Eaton, that the terms are inadmissible. I am willing to do a good deal for the unfortunate men who have suffered such a disaster; but as for taking them back on parole, at this stage of the war, it cannot be done, and you must know that as well as I do."

"I am aware of that, my lord; but you must also be aware that the rules of ordinary warfare do not apply to privateers. Our vessel is not a regular ship-of-war, but a letter-of-marque, and, as such, amenable to no rules, as to prisoners, but what we choose to enforce ourselves. In other words, if we choose to demand a ransom for these men, and to give them up to you, we have a perfect right to do so; and our Government will not interfere to prevent us from enforcing our terms."

Lord Gowrie looked shocked.

"Why, certainly, if you put it in that way, you have a right; but I thought you came from a regular man-of-war."

"I thought that I sent in my message distinctly, my lord, that the schooner that had taken your galley was the *Emerald*, privateer. I certainly intended to do it."

"Ah, yes, I believe you did; but it had escaped my mind, sir. Ah, well, what do wish to say further, then?"

"Simply that, if you do not like the terms that I have just given you for the prisoners, we will treat with you for their ransom, in the same style that the Algerians do, and for the same prices."

The earl looked inexpressibly disgusted at the cool proposition of the young privateersman, and managed to say, in a tone of grave remonstrance:

"But, my dear sir, if you do such a thing as that, you put yourself out of the pale of civilized warfare, and are liable to be hung at the yard-arm of any of his majesty's ships that happens to meet you, after you go away from here."

"We are willing to take the risk of that, Governor. There is, however, another way in which you can save your men from the tortures of a schooner's hold in such weather as this, on the way home to New York; and that is, to give your individual parole that they shall never be used in this war, until there are enough American prisoners to offset them."

"My individual parole? That is a different thing, sir. I could not keep it, when the squadron came in; for we have a lot of marines here that are to be drafted into the fleet, as soon as it gets here."

"We are willing to take the chances on that, my lord, if you will take them off our hands. I will be frank with you, and say that we have but a small vessel, and the quarters are cramped; but that, rather than let these men go, after the hard work we had to take them, we are prepared to see them all afloat in the sea, where we found them, and let them swim to shore, if they can, and if the sharks will let them. That is the fact, my lord, and it is needless to disguise it by fine words."

So saying, Eaton took a seat and looked at the old Governor, as much as to say: "What do you think of that?"

His lordship hesitated a few moments, and at last asked:

"Well, suppose I do give my parole—"

"That would not be accepted now, my lord. You have refused to be bound by it, and we want a guarantee that our treaty will be fulfilled. If you cannot guarantee that these men shall not serve against us, I must set them afloat again, and let them take their chances."

"But surely you will not be so barbarous as to murder them in cold blood."

"No. You are at perfect liberty to send out any of your boats or galleys in the port, and save them," replied Eaton coolly; "but you must remember that any boat that makes its appearance outside of this harbor will be riddled with shot, before she can get to the men in the water. On the whole, I should recommend to your lordship to pay the ransom for your friends."

"And what ransom do you want, sir?" asked

the earl impatiently. "It is an outrage; but I suppose I shall have to submit to it, and take revenge, some day, in watching you at the yard arm."

Eaton rose and made a profound bow to the old nobleman.

"I hope your lordship will never have that pleasure. Not that I wish to deprive you of it; but that what would be fun for you, would be decidedly unpleasant to me. The rate of ransom that Captain Green and myself have agreed upon, is that of ten pounds a man, for the sailors; and a hundred for the officer in command. There are only sixty-seven men, all told, in the schooner, and Captain Ferris ought to be well worth a hundred pounds. Don't you think so, my lord?"

Lord Gowrie grunted a reluctant assent to the question, adding:

"But a number of the men on board were slaves—"

"Exactly so, and therefore we should be entirely justified in taking them away, and selling them in America; but we do not wish to be bothered with them, and so offer them to you at the same price as the rest. That will make a total of seven hundred and seventy pounds sterling, which we prefer to have delivered to us in gold, on which all the prisoners shall be released unconditionally. How does that programme suit you, my lord?"

"I assent to it, because I have no alternative; and for no other reason," was the sullen answer of Lord Gowrie. "Do you want the money before you deliver the prisoners, and what security have we, if we pay it to you, that we shall ever see them?"

"The best of all security, my lord, the word of an American citizen! You may not think much of it, to be sure; but I value it too dearly to sell it for a paltry sum of money. No, my lord, you will have to trust to our honor. We have the upper hand in this negotiation, and are entitled to the advantage in terms."

The earl sighed heavily, as he had to admit that the American had reason on his side, and responded in the same stiff and sullen manner as before:

"Very well, sir, very well; I suppose the quickest way to get rid of you is to do as you say, and pay you off at once. I will do so."

Yet he did not leave the room, as he appeared about to do, but lingered to say to his daughter in a low voice:

"Jane, Jane, I insist on your leaving the room when I do. It is a scandal. It must not be."

Eaton heard the whisper but did not catch its import, till it was revealed to him by the answer of Lady Jane herself, in a perfectly cool and audible way:

"Much obliged, my lord; but I wish to speak to the American officer, to find if he has ever seen anything of Mr. Blair?"

The earl, looking aghast at the boldness of his daughter, could but reply hurriedly:

"By all means. Ask all you want to ask; but it must be in my presence."

"Of course, my lord. I never dreamed of doing anything else," was the virtuous reply of the lady, who really had had no such intentions. "I merely wish to ask the gentleman if he knows an officer of the name of Frank Blair, and where he is now?"

Eaton could hardly credit his ears when he heard this question addressed openly to him; but he had presence of mind to give the answer that had been agreed on between him and Blair on board the schooner.

Assuming a look of great regret, he said:

"Pardon me, but did you say Blair?"

"Certainly," was the impatient reply. "Did you ever meet the gentleman, sir?"

Eaton put his hand to his eyes, and answered: "Alas, madam, the gentleman is dead and buried."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when he regretted he had said them; for Lady Jane Blair, her face turning as pale as death, lost all her pretended composure, and fainted away with a suddenness that scared the young man out of his wits.

The old earl, on the other hand, was as much delighted at the news as Ferris had shown himself at the time he heard it in the cabin of the *Saucy Jane*, and displayed so little concern at his daughter's swoon, that he actually went on questioning Eaton, without noticing her any more than if she had been out of the room.

"Did you say the fellow was dead?" he asked, eagerly. "Are you quite sure, sir? He is such an artful fellow, that I can hardly believe he is dead till I see his grave with my own eyes. You are sure Blair is dead?"

Eaton concealed his disgust at the tone in which the question was asked, to answer in a sad voice:

"Alas! my lord, it is only too true! Poor Blair was killed by a sperm whale when she went into her flurry, last year, and I saw him taken down in a thousand fathoms of water, along with a whole boat's crew of good fellows as ever pulled an oar. Yes, my lord, there is no doubt about it—Frank Blair is as dead as a door nail."

The earl rubbed his hands and said in a more pleasant way than he had yet used:

"My dear sir, I am glad you came here. I am glad to have met you, and the last piece of news is the best of all."

Eaton looked over toward Lady Jane, lying back in her chair, pale as death, and asked:

"Is not the lady ill, sir? I hope it is not my tidings that have had anything to do with her attack."

"Pooh, pooh, pooh!" said the old earl, hastily. "Nothing the matter with her sir, nothing in the world. Only the heat. Take no notice, sir, if you please. I will go and get that money for you. The slave-owners shall pay the bulk of it. Yes, yes."

And the old gentleman, in his excitement, went out of the door and forgot all about his daughter, though she was as near to being totally insensible as a woman can be when she faints with her eyes open and sees and hears all that goes on, without the power of moving. Such was the condition of Lady Jane Blair when Eaton ran to her, as she sat in the chair, ready to fall off, and whispered in her ear:

"It is all a scheme, dear lady. Blair is in command of the schooner, and he sent me in to give you this letter."

As he spoke, he slipped the letter of Blair into her hand as she lay back in the chair, and such was the secretive nature of the lady, that, fainting and all as she was, she managed to take the letter and hide it in the bosom of her dress before her respected parent made his appearance again, which he did within five minutes, with a large bag of sovereigns in his hand, saying:

"Here, sir, is your money, and you had better count it, so that there may be no mistake."

Then he went over to his daughter, and Eaton heard him attempting to console her in the style of a man who knows he has done a shabby thing and is trying to coax another to forgive and forget.

Eaton, while he was counting the money, or pretending to do so, kept the corner of his eye all the time on Lady Jane, and noticed that she was recovering her composure in wonderfully short order; though her eyes were cast down, and she looked as if she were overwhelmed with grief.

He could almost see the angry heaving of her bosom, as she listened to the hypocritical efforts of the old earl to comfort her for the loss of a lover, by telling her that he was not a fit person for her to have married, anyway, and that she was better off without him.

The efforts of the old earl to belie Blair in his absence had an effect of which he little dreamed. They served to break the last tie that bound the old man to the girl, and the girl to the country of her birth. It was, perhaps, a sense of this that made her say faintly to him at one time:

"Don't—don't; you will be sorry for it. Don't say anything more!"

Lord Gowrie desisted at that feeble cry, and the young lady asked him, in the same faint way:

"May I speak with this gentleman alone for a moment, papa? He is dead now, and you need not fear I shall do you any disgrace. I only want to ask a few questions about—how—Frank died. That is all."

Her father seemed to be rather discomfited at the request, for he stammered and haggled over it for quite a while; but he finally consented, and Lady Jane and Eaton found themselves alone together again, with the understanding that ten minutes would be allowed for the interchange of condolences about the late lamented Blair.

No sooner was the old man fairly out of the room than the young lady bent over to say, in a rapid, impetuous way:

"Now, then, speak quick! What does he want? It was cruel of you to say what you did, and I will be even with you yet for it. But speak quickly now—what is it he wants?"

"You will find it all in that letter, Lady Jane. I believe he has made an audacious proposal to you in it that you may not be disposed to accept; but if you do, you are to follow the plan that he has laid down therein. My only instructions are, to ask you to burn the letter as soon as you have read it."

She had already taken it from her bosom and was devouring it with an eagerness that had made her oblivious of spectators.

Eaton saw her color deeply, as he looked at her reading.

She finished rapidly, and in the nervous, impetuous way in which she did everything thrust it into her bosom again, and said:

"Are you going back to him now?"

"As soon as I can get aboard, Lady Jane."

"Tell him," she said, coloring deeply as before, "that I will do as he says. The signal is not safe; but you can tell him I will come to the rendezvous at the time he mentions."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

THE full light of a tropical moon was shining down on the palms and bananas of the Antilles. The intense heat of the day had given place to the coolness of night on the sea, while the land was hotter than ever, on account of the setting in of the land-breeze.

Out in the bay, the great groopers and Jew-

fish were lazily playing on the surface of the water; showing their sides, gleaming like silver in the moonlight; while the rush of the albacores after the flying-fish was the only sound that disturbed the stillness that reigned over land and water.

Outside the harbor of Kingston, the sea was as smooth as a mirror; the land-breeze failing to ruffle it, and the occasional leap of a fish only served to make the smoothness more striking, when the ripple it caused had subsided.

The fashionable and rich part of the population of Jamaica does not reside in the towns, when it can help itself; and the Governor of the island was no exception to the rule.

At night, the Government House was apt to be given over to darkness and desolation, while the family of Lord Gowrie had retired to the cooler slopes of the hills above Kingston, and was enjoying relief from mosquitoes and warm fogs, that comes of an elevation of fifteen hundred feet above the sea, even in the tropics.

On the evening after the release of the prisoners, taken by the Saucy Jane; the Government House was dark as usual, and the country house of the Governor was all alight with lamps, hung in the trees, that then took the place of our more poetical Japanese lanterns; when a boat, that pulled six oars of a side, but made no sound beyond a faint dripping from the blades of the oars into the water, glided into a little bay, around a point, below the spot on which the country house was perched, and grounded softly on the beach.

A man rose up out of the stern-sheets, and said to the rowers, in a low voice:

"Take her away, out of sight, under the mangroves; but be ready to pull like the devil, if you hear the signal."

Then he beckoned silently to another man, who was still sitting in the place vacated by the first; and this second man rose and followed him up the bank into a thicket of tropical vegetation, that bordered the strip of beach, and merged in the plantations above, by imperceptible degrees.

As the two disappeared, the men in the boat pushed off again; and soon had the little vessel hidden from sight in the shade of the mangrove thickets, that overhung the water, all along the beach, and formed a perfect shelter from observation.

In two minutes after this had been done, no one, who had not seen the operation, could have possibly guessed that a boat was there at all; while the two men who had gone ashore were perfectly invisible.

Quiet settled down on the bay once more.

Then a careful observer, who was well-acquainted with the locality, might have noticed an occasional waving of the bushes on the hill. A little later, the form of a man made its appearance, in an open spot, where the wild vegetation bordered on the fields of the plantation above, and a low voice said to some one who was following:

"Step softly. We are getting so near, that the dogs may scent us, if we are not careful."

"All right," was the response, out of the thicket below. "You know the way better than I do; so give your orders, and I will obey them."

Out into the moonlight came a second man, and one might see that both wore a sort of naval uniform, of dark blue, with brass buttons.

The leader was Frank Blair, and Eaton followed him.

The privateersman looked full of high spirits and fun, as he came into view.

"What a high old time they will have in the morning," he whispered, "when they find who has been here. I would give half my chance of prize-money to have a good look at the earl's face when he hears the news."

"Don't you think that we had better be sure we are going to get out of this alive, before we begin to count our chickens?" said Eaton, rather dryly. "We have not got the lady yet, and we have got to run the gantlet of the dogs of the plantation before we do."

Blair laughed, in a peculiar quiet way of his own.

"We shall get the lady; never fear, Eaton. I wish I was as certain that we shall get out of these seas safely. I know all the ins and outs of this place as well as if I had been born here. And then you forget that Lady Jane is just as familiar with it as I, if not more so. She will find a way to get out, and I shall find a way to persuade her to stop, after she is once here."

They were at the edge of a large banana patch as he spoke, and the privateersman put his hand on the top of the low fence, and scaled it with a silent caution that showed he was fully alive to the danger that encompassed them.

The banana patch was a sufficient protection to them, as long as they stooped low and kept under cover of the broad leaves. but the moonlight outside was so bright that Eaton whispered:

"We shall be seen, if we go any further, captain. Let us keep under the fence, and get in by that outhouse I see over yonder."

The house of which he spoke was a negro

cabin, at the end of a long row of the same kind of habitations; and it offered a shelter to the adventurers, if they could be sure no one was awake in it.

"Never do in the world," whispered Blair. "That is Uncle Cupid's cabin, and, as likely as not, the old man is sitting up to make *Obeah*. If he spies us, we shall have to dig out or kill him; for he is a strong old scamp, and will fight like a tiger."

"Then how are we going to get in and see the lady?" asked Eaton impatiently. "I don't see a chance to cross that strip of moonlight without being seen; and if we don't cross it, we can never get to the house."

Blair looked at the prospect before him with a perplexity that showed that he had not fully counted the cost, before he set out on his expedition.

"It is a puzzler, isn't it?" he muttered to himself.

Then, with a more cheerful expression, he added:

"We must wait a bit! I will trust Jane to find a way to get out of the house and meet us. The place is just beyond here, under the old calabash tree yonder; if we can only get there without being seen. Stay, I see a way, I think. Follow me."

He crouched down on his hands and knees, and crawled across the patch of bananas, like a wolf on a trail, while Eaton, to whom the expedition was by no means the pleasure that it seemed to be to Blair, followed more leisurely, keeping a bright lookout all the time, for any signs of discovery.

Luckily for them, the bananas were in full bearing, and afforded an ample shelter; for the privateersman, in his eagerness, was very imprudent, and exposed himself a great deal more than Eaton liked to see. However, they managed to get to the old calabash tree in safety, and Blair uttered a sigh of relief, echoed most heartily by Eaton, as he murmured to his companion:

"So far, so good. Now let us see if she will dare to come, as she said she would."

The great calabash tree was a perfect protection to them, now they were under its shelter. Its broad leaves were a sort of umbrella overhead, and a screen all round them; as they stood up on one of the branches, and tried to get a view of the house, which was only about ten rods off.

By climbing up a little, they could see that something was going on in the mansion of the Governor.

There was a sound of music; and the soft shuffle of feet in the dance showed that a ball was probably in progress.

The negro cabins were deserted, and they could see the slaves all round the house, staring at the festivities, with an absorbed attention that showed Eaton how it was he and Blair had not been discovered.

"Mighty lucky for us," said Blair to Eaton, in a delighted whisper. "Those niggers will be so busy, looking at the ball, that they won't think of looking at us. I've a good mind to go in there myself, and have a bit of fun. What do you say?"

"By all means, captain, if you are *very* anxious to end your days in Dartmoor prison," was the dry reply of Eaton. "Count me out, if you please. I am willing to take all ordinary risks in warfare; but I must say that I don't believe in being foolhardy."

Blair was about to reply, when he suddenly started and clutched Eaton's arm, whispering:

"There, there! don't you see her now? That is herself!"

The man was trembling with excitement, and was nearly falling off the branch on which he stood.

"Jane, Jane," he murmured. "*My Jane!* She is coming, as she said she would; and all the powers of England can't stop her. She does love me, Eaton; she *does!* she *must!* or she wouldn't come here, in the face of all she risks. My God! What can I do to show such a girl how I love her? I'll attack the forts! I'll fight a frigate single-handed! I'll do something to make her proud of me, by the heavens above us! I *must* do it, I *must*. I can't let her think I am a mere common fellow, in love."

Eaton could hardly help laughing out loud, to hear the rhapsodies of this ardent lover; but he managed to say soothingly:

"There, there, captain, don't tumble off the bough; or all the fat will be in the fire, and you will lose the lady. Keep cool, and see what she wants you to do."

Blair quieted down in a moment, and watched the light and supple figure of the lady, which was now plainly visible in the moonlight, strolling slowly along over the lawn that surrounded the large plantation house, coming gradually toward the calabash tree.

She was not alone. By her side stalked Captain Austin Ferris, evidently trying to explain or excuse something, from the way in which he spoke; though they could not tell what he was saying, at that distance.

His gestures were those of appeal and expostulation, and it was also evident that the lady was teasing him unmercifully.

At last the voices become so loud and near, that they could catch the sense, and both men smiled to hear what was going on.

"But, my dear Lady Jane," said the captain, earnestly. "What could I do? Tell me that, if you please."

"That is not my business, captain," responded the lady, in her most biting tone. "I am not supposed to know what you soldiers and sailors are to do, in time of battle. I can only say that if *my* father had yielded to a little bit of a vessel like that, in the way *you* did, I should be ashamed of him, and should be disposed to run away with the first handsome man that came around, just to spite him for his bad behavior."

"I fought as well as I could, till the galley sunk under me," the poor captain made shift to reply. "A man is not expected to fight after his vessel is sunk, is he, Lady Jane?"

"You have read a good deal of Greek history, I presume, captain; and will not forget what the Spartan ladies used to say to their lovers, when they gave them their shields to go to war. I have heard it often. 'Return with it or upon it,' was their advice. That is all changed now, isn't it? The new advice is, to come *back*, with or without honor—it is a matter of indifference, as long as you come *back*, *alive*. Ah, what degenerate creatures men are nowadays!"

As she uttered the last words, she was right under the tree in which the two privateersmen were still concealed; and added, for their benefit:

"I abhor a man who comes back alive, and owes his life to the mercy of a foe that we are all taught to despise, as degenerate Englishmen."

"And so they *are* degenerate Englishmen," snapped Ferris, now thoroughly enraged at the biting sarcasm of the lady, that spent itself on him without a shadow of disguise. "So they *are* degenerate Englishmen, or they would have fought me fairly, instead of standing off at long bowls, not daring to close. Oh, if I had only had *one* fair chance at them! *one* blow! I would have said nothing at my ill-luck; but now! to be taunted by you for a misfortune that any man was liable to have happen to him, I—I—I swear, Lady Jane, I don't think it is either fair or kind in you to talk so."

And the mortified officer very nearly shed tears of anger.

Lady Jane only tossed her head with still more scorn, and retorted:

"Oh, yes; that's all very well for you to say; but I saw the whole thing from the windows, and I saw that you never managed to hit the schooner once, and she hit you every time. The fact is, you are not equal to fighting these Yankees, and you may as well give up the trial in despair now, as well as any other time. You don't know how to fight in their style, and they will beat you every time you try it."

And the saucy lady laughed in such a tantalizing way, that Ferris, in a pet, observed:

"I am very glad I afford you so much amusement, Lady Jane. I think it is getting damp here. Shall we go in, or do you want to have a good laugh, all to yourself, about me?"

"As you please," was the composed reply. "I am not particular about it, captain. My only use for you, henceforth, will be as a laughing-stock for my leisure hours, and your room will always be more welcome than your company. Good-evening, sir."

The words struck the poor captain like a slap in the face, and he bowed low, choking with his mortification, and muttered:

"Good-evening, Lady Jane; and thank you for your frankness."

Then he stalked off, as stiff as a sentry on post; and the lady sent after him, as a Parthian arrow, a slight, mocking laugh, that made Eaton, up in the tree, say to himself:

"What a little devil that is! No more mercy than a wolf!"

No sooner had the steps of Ferris fairly died away in the distance, than Blair, whose impatience had been growing greater and greater, forgetting all prudence at the sight of his mistress, slipped down the tree and clutched the lady in his arms.

Eaton kept his place, not daring to stir. The privateersman caught up Lady Jane as if he was going to devour her, and the lady, lately so haughty, seemed to be divided between tears and kisses.

Her temper had vanished under the influence of love.

CHAPTER XV.

LADY JANE.

As soon as the raptures of the lovers had subsided somewhat, Lady Jane said penitently:

"I know I was unladylike and rude, and all the rest of it, Frank; but it was the only way I could get rid of him, and he is *such* a leech, that Ferris! I don't really think he was so cowardly, dear; do you?"

Blair laughed.

"If he had only known you as well as I do, Jane, he would have given you as good as you

sent. Cowardly! No, no, I never met the Englishman that *was* a coward on the sea. We're the same race, child, the same race, only *we* have improved it. Ferris is no coward, and you treated him shamefully, to please me, I suppose; but it didn't. I forgive you, however, on one condition."

"And what is that?" asked the lady, in an unnecessarily low voice, that told Eaton, up in the tree, that she was hiding her face in Blair's vest.

The privateersman laughed, as he answered: "Simple enough, my dear. I came here to-night, to make you my wife; and if you won't run away with me now, I shall go in there, and ask the whole company whether they won't help me to persuade you. I'm in earnest, Jane, as you will find out, if you try to fool with me, and if you don't say yes, you will repent it, all the rest of your maiden life."

Eaton listened, to hear what the lady would say.

He expected her to break out in the saucy style in which he had heard her rate the poor English captain.

But Lady Jane, with a lover that she hated, and the same Lady Jane, with Frank Blair, were two very different persons.

She only hung her head lower, and murmured:

"Oh, Frank, Frank, I can't, I can't. Consider poor papa!"

"I have considered all about him I'm going to," returned Blair, in his most obstinate tones. "I don't want to marry *him*. It's *you*, my love. He will never consent to our union peaceably, and there is no need that he should. It is *war time*, now, and no peaceful consents are expected. I intend to carry you off, like the old Romans did *their* wives; and I don't doubt but what you will be just as well pleased as they were, when it is all over—won't you, Jane?" Eaton could not hear the answer; but it seemed to be quite satisfactory; for the privateersman began to hug the lady again, and there is no telling how much further the revelations of Lady Jane's possible sweetness of temper might have proceeded, when the sound of voices, in earnest conversation, was heard approaching the tree, and Jane whisked her train out of the moonlight, and slipped behind the trunk of the huge tree, locked closely in Blair's arms.

Eaton, feeling that a crisis was approaching, looked through the foliage of the calabash tree, to behold two negroes, talking in loud tones about the "quality folks," so much engrossed in their subject, that they passed within two or three feet of the lovers without seeing them, and would have gone on in peace, had it not happened that one of them was followed by a small cur, that stopped to bark at Blair, as it scented him.

That moment the two negroes stopped short, to exclaim:

"Wurra dat? What de debbil dat dog bark at?"

Concealment was useless, and Lady Jane Blair stepped out at once, saying authoritatively:

"What are you stopping for, you two? Go to your quarters at once, and don't dare to interfere with me. Do you hear?"

The frightened blacks shrunk back, in awe of the temper of their spiteful little mistress, and one of them sad humbly:

"Didn' know, missis: didn' know nuffin who 'twas. Ax pardon."

Then they slouched off and Blair said:

"That settles it, Jane. It's to-night or never. Those fellows are sure to blab, and then there is no more chance of our meeting without discovery. You must make up your mind to run away with me to-night."

"To-night?" echoed the lady, with a little scream of horror. "I haven't got a single thing ready. You surely don't expect me to run away without any trunks, Frank?"

Blair whistled.

"Trunks! Good Lord! I never thought of that. What will we do about them? I shall have to storm the house to get them, Jane. See here: can't you get along with what you have on, for a day or two, and I'll send in a flag of truce for the rest of the things, after we are safely married."

"Married, indeed!" retorted the young lady. "A pretty marriage that would be! You are talking absurdly, Frank, and you know it. I cannot be expected to do anything of the sort, and I *won't*. That's flat."

And for the first time in their interview, Lady Jane began to look as if her temper had not all disappeared in her love.

But there is some excuse for a woman who is asked to run away at a moment's notice, with no wardrobe; and Eaton could not help thinking that she had a right to be angry, and that Blair was decidedly unreasonable.

But he had yet to witness a revelation of surprises in that night of romance. Blair had evidently made up his mind that Jane should go; and he began to argue, with a mixture of fun and pleading; scolding and coaxing; till the usually haughty little beauty actually yielded, and said, at she hid her face on his shoulder:

"Yes, yes, anything in the world, if you will only promise to make a name like Nelson, so that I can be proud of you."

Blair said no more; but began to lead her away down the hill through the banana-patch, regardless of the moonlight, when Eaton, who saw that all must be discovered if they did not crouch, called out cautiously, as they were going away:

"Blair, Blair, for God's sake stoop; or they will see you from the house."

His words produced a violent start from Lady Jane, who exclaimed:

"Who is that?"

"That? Oh, that is only my friend, Eaton, whom you saw to-day," was the indifferent reply of Blair, as he stooped down, in obedience to the warning. "Stoop, Jane, stoop; or they will see us."

In a moment Lady Jane had whisked back to the tree, and hidden herself under its branches, to inquire, in the sternest of voices:

"And was that man up there, *listening*, all the time, MR. BLAIR?"

Her tone was that of a justly indignant woman, and Eaton slipped down the tree to say:

"Yes, it is perfectly true, Lady Jane; but I did not hear anything, because I was busy listening to something else. We have no time to waste on sentiment. Your lover's life is in danger, every moment we stay here. We are liable to be *hung*, if we are caught, and here you are squabbling about nothing. If you are going to run away with the captain, go, and I will protect the rear; but, for Heaven's sake, don't stand here to quarrel with me."

Whether it was the scolding or not; it is certain that Lady Jane became suddenly docile, and said resignedly:

"Go on, Frank; I will be careful not to show myself."

So saying, and with a silence and circumspection that Eaton could not sufficiently admire, the two lovers set out on their perilous journey across the banana-patch, in full view of the house, and succeeded in crossing it, without disturbing any one, till he knew that they had reached the bushes below, by the rustling therein; when he was startled by the loud bark of a dog in those same bushes, and, almost immediately after, the sound of a shot aroused every one, within and without the mansion of the Governor.

Eaton knew well enough what had happened; as soon as he heard the shot. Some negro's cur had frightened Lady Jane; and the impetuous Blair, without thinking of the consequences, had fired at the animal.

The young man saw that there was no time to lose, and he darted out of the shelter of the calabash tree at once, with no further thought of concealment, and dashed across the banana-patch to the bushes below, shouting as he went:

"On! on! No time to lose!"

He heard a great shouting and barking behind him; but heeded nothing till he got to the shore of the little bay below, where he saw the boat, pulling out of the shelter of the mangroves, and coming toward the beach, as fast as it could.

Blair and Lady Jane were both on the beach before him, and the privateersman was laughing as he ran along.

His reckless nature seemed to be in its element in a scene of this sort, and Eaton thought to himself that he would not remain in his position of mentor to Blair, on account of his man-of-war experience, very long. The privateersman was beginning to know how to take care of himself very well, already.

The boat had been hidden in a clump of mangroves, about a quarter of a mile away, and it had not yet reached the beach, when the loud barking of dogs behind the two privateersmen told them that the enemy was coming in force, and close at hand.

Blair stopped on the beach and called to Eaton:

"Out with your pistols, man! It is only the niggers. Give it to them, and the rest will run."

Eaton turned to the bushes, and out of the cover burst a crowd of black men and large dogs.

The men stopped at the presented pistols; but not so the dogs.

They were all, without exception, large animals, of the breed generally called "blood-hounds," but really mongrels, with a preponderance of mastiff blood in them; and they were all trained to hunt runaway negroes.

Straight at the two privateersmen they dashed, and there is but little doubt that they would have been severely mauled, if not torn to pieces, in spite of their pistols (for there were at least a dozen dogs in the party), had not Lady Jane herself, with a courage that made Eaton ready to fall down and worship her, actually ran out in front of her lover, and called to the dogs, as if she knew them, commanding them to stop.

And, still more to the surprise of the young men, the great brutes, each one capable of pulling down an ox singly, paused at her voice, and gave time to her to cry out to the pursuing negroes:

"What is the matter, here, with you? Don't you know your mistress, that you come out at

me as if I were a runaway field-hand? Go back to the house and attend to your own affairs."

There was a moment of hesitation, and then one of the blacks called off the dogs, and said, in an awkward kind of way:

"Beg pardon, my lady, but my lord sent us out to see what war de matter. It warn't our fault."

"There's nothing the matter, and you can go back to my lord and tell him so," retorted the lady, angrily. Do you hear me? I'll have you all whipped to-morrow, if you stay here another moment."

The air of authority in the little lady cowed the negroes for a minute, and they began to disperse, while the boat was rapidly nearing the shore, when a new actor appeared on the scene, in the person of Captain Ferris, who came running down the bank in a great hurry, to shout out:

"The Yankees! the Yankees, you fools! Can't you see the boat there? Cut them to pieces!"

His words produced an immediate commotion, as the negroes began to yell, one to the other:

"De Yankees! de Yankees! No 'tain't! Tell you 'tis! Don't you see de lady, you fool nigger? No, I tell you. De Yankees! Dey try to run 'way wid de missis. Gib it to de raxals!"

So the confusion became worse confounded in that moment, and before any one had presence of mind to take any measures to apprehend the two privateersmen, the boat had grounded on the beach, and the crew were coming up, with their pistols and cutlasses, yelling, in a style that frightened the negroes so, they all turned tail and fled, taking with them the dogs, which appeared to share the demoralization of their masters.

Ferris, who seemed to be taken aback at the whole affair, was left alone on the beach to face the crew of the privateer, now flushed and excited with their easy victory; and Blair called out to him, presenting his pistol:

"Surrender, sir, surrender!"

Ferris was unarmed, and he immediately answered, in a tone of great vexation:

"Of course I surrender. What the deuce can I do, against such luck as you have? Who are you, sir, anyway, and what are you coming down on peaceable people at night for? Are you a navy officer, or what? I should appeal to your sense of honor, if this is what you call warfare, to come down on plantations like thieves."

Blair laughed, and came up close to him, so that the Englishman could see his face plainly.

"Captain Ferris," he said, not without kindness, "I am Frank Blair and I was a deceiver to you, the other day, when I pretended that I was not. The only excuse that I can offer is that, I am in love, and I knew I could never hope to see Lady Jane Blair, if the Governor knew I was in this neighborhood. Now, sir, there is no need why we should be enemies any longer. I do not wish to keep you a prisoner; for I am going back to the United States, as fast as I can, to get married to Lady Jane."

Ferris seemed to be half stunned by this speech, which was delivered in a quiet and conversational manner; and he stammered:

"Sir, I—I—I—do not understand you. Lady Jane? What has she to do with to-night? Surely *she* is not here."

Blair bowed low to the astonished Englishman, as he replied:

"My dear sir, I am going to release you, in order that you may take a message to Lord Gowrie. I wish you to say to his lordship, that I have captured his daughter, Lady Jane Blair, to-night, and shall hold her as my wife for the future. If his lordship wishes to sanctify our union by his presence, it is well. I will wait, outside this harbor, for twenty-four hours, to give him an opportunity to come to my schooner, with Lady Jane's effects, and bring his chaplain with him. If he does not like to do that, and see his daughter married like a lady, then he has only himself to blame, for the scandal that will follow. I shall sail for the United States, after the expiration of the time I mentioned, and shall be married there, as soon as we arrive. Now, sir, if you will tell his lordship that, I shall be greatly obliged to you."

Poor Ferris could only bow in answer, and say in a low voice:

"I will deliver the message, sir."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE POMONA.

THE sun had risen again, and the sea-breeze had set in for the day, when the semaphore-man, above the Government House, sent down word to the Governor that a sail was in sight, that he took to be the Pomona frigate, that had been ordered to the Jamaica station, and had been expected for some days.

The news found the old man completely broken down by the flight of his daughter on the previous night, and ready to sink into an imbecile state. He did not heed it at first; but when the message was repeated, he looked up, in a stupid way, to say:

"What is that? What—what—who is it, Brown?"

"The Pomona frigate is signaled in sight, my lord, that is all," said Brown respectfully, and not a little puzzled at the unwonted quiet of his master's manner. "She that we have been a-looking for, this three months, my lord."

Lord Gowrie nodded his head gloomily, and muttered to himself:

"Ay, ay, and now she comes too late."

"Send Captain Ferris to me," he said to Brown listlessly, and the worthy messenger departed, to spread the news in the kitchen of the Governor's house, that "my lord were a-getting ill (poorly, he said) and that he were a-losin' of his temper fast."

The news of Lady Jane Blair's flight had been kept a profound secret from the whole household.

Ferris had seen to that. Lady Jane was so much accustomed to doing things out of the common way, that no one had marveled at her sudden disappearance on the previous night, and had readily accepted the excuse, offered by the aide-de-camp, that she had gone off on a trip, with one of the revenue boats, commanded by an old sailor, who had known her as a child; and people contented themselves with a shrug, when they talked of Lady Jane, and the observation:—

"Well it is a nice thing to be an earl's daughter. One can do so many things, without impropriety."

So the old earl was brooding over his loss, and wondering how he could ever face the sneers of his London acquaintances, when they heard of the way in which the Yankee had fooled him. He was trying to make up his mind to face the inevitable, and go on board the schooner, to legalize the marriage of his daughter, who otherwise would be in a worse state than ever, when he was roused by the news of the coming of the Pomona, and sent for Ferris in his listless despair, not thinking of anything else but surrender.

To him thus sitting, came Ferris, with a look on his face that made the earl ask:

"What is the matter, Ferris? At a time like this, I see no cause for smiling—grinning, I call it, like a Cheshire cat, sir."

Ferris smoothed his face out to answer:

"True, my lord; but we have better news now. The Pomona is in sight. Does your lordship know what that means? The Pomona is a French prize, and one of the fastest frigates in the navy. She can catch that schooner for us, and that is why I smile, my lord."

The earl looked up, as if he began to see a ray of light in the prospect.

"Do you really think so, Ferris?" he asked, in a searching, anxious tone of voice, that showed how deeply he was moved. "Do you really think that we could undo the mischief if we caught the schooner to-day? Consider that—"

"Consider that no one knows of the escapade of her ladyship but myself, my lord, and that I am willing to overlook it, if I can get her to-day; and then, reflect that if we catch this Blair, we can hang him for violation of the laws of war. I tell you, my lord, we never had such a chance in all our lives before to avenge the past and secure the future as now."

The English officer was full of excitement as he spoke. He had been insulted by Lady Jane, and beaten by Blair so completely that he was wild for revenge, and he saw the chance thereof in the coming of the swift frigate, Pomona.

"All we have to do, my lord," he continued, rapidly, "is to signal the frigate not to come in, but to pursue the schooner outside and take her at any hazard."

"But can the signal be sent to him in time to catch the schooner?" asked Lord Gowrie, in a listless, doubtful way, that showed how he was broken better than anything else. "Jane is gone, and all the frigates in the world cannot bring her back to me. Oh, Ferris, I was so fond of that child! I was so proud of her, with all her faults! She never would have done this if the scoundrel had not used force. I am positive of it. To think that a Blair—a Blair of Blair-Gowrie, should have run away with a Yankee, a common sailor! Go, Ferris, go from me. Do what you please; but do not ask me to do anything. I am overwhelmed with this whole business."

Ferris cast a glance of contempt at the earl, as the old nobleman sat there, with his head bowed on his hands, and the aide-de-camp said, as he left the room:

"Very good, my lord. I will do what is best and report to you after I have made a success."

Then Ferris left the room and went up to the semaphore-station, where he found the watcher at his post, looking through a long telescope at the sea, on which reposed two sails only.

One of these was the little schooner Saucy Jane, that lay in the offing, right opposite to the port of Kingston, and was "standing off and on," in nautical phrase, waiting for the lapse of time which Blair had named to Ferris in his terms of the night before.

The semaphore-telegraph of those days was a

great improvement over the old methods of communication; but a great way behind the telegraph of our times.

It consisted of a series of towers, in plain sight of each other, each provided with a powerful telescope and a skeleton at the top, by means of which the signals were transmitted from one to the other as fast as the watchmen could read them and send them on.

The semaphore-man at Kingston was a sergeant of artillery, who had been invalided, and sent to his present post for an easy berth in his old age.

His name was Rogers, and he rose, as soon as he saw the captain enter the signal room, to salute and say:

"I wish your honor a very good-morning, sir. 'Ope I see you well, sir. Very fine mornin', your honor."

Ferris nodded in his lordly way.

"Yes, Rogers, my good fellow, a fine morning, as you say. Ah, how long do you think it will be, before the Pomona gets in?"

"Your honor can see for yourself, if your honor will take a squint through the glass," replied the sergeant, respectfully. "The vessel ain't lifted her topsails yet, from the port, sir; but she ain't over fifteen or twenty mile off, your honor, I should say."

The captain took a look through the glass of the old sergeant, and beheld on the broad blue field of the ocean, a large ship, close-hauled to the northeast trade-wind, coming for the port of Kingston, at a very rapid pace.

She was directly outside the schooner, and seemed to be coming to pounce on her, unawares, when Ferris said to the sergeant, in a thoughtful way:

"Rogers, do you think those people on the Yankee schooner can see the frigate yet?"

Rogers considered a moment, before he answered:

"Think not, sir. We 'as the light in our favor, and that is what deceives your honor into thinking that 'ere frigate a good deal nearer than she is. No, sir, they can't see her yet from the mast-head of that 'ere schooner, let alone her decks."

"Can you signal the frigate?" asked the officer, to which Rogers replied:

"Cert'nly, your honor; done it a'ready. She give me 'er number through the glass. That's 'ow I knows it's the Pomona, your honor. She shows a power of canvas, your honor, for a vessel of 'er size."

Ferris looked long and earnestly through the glass at the frigate. As Rogers had said, she did show a great deal of canvas for a vessel of her size, though that was considerable. The Pomona was a new frigate, of the class called "thirty-eights," because they were supposed to carry that number of guns; but generally had so many extra carronades and "chasers," of one sort and another about them, that they had from forty to forty-two or four guns, all to d.

Her hull, low and black, was almost hidden in the enormous spread above her, and the breadth of the sails was just as remarkable as their height above the water.

She was still at a great distance; but not too great to note the rapidity of her progress.

"She's a comin' like a race-hoss, your honor," said Rogers, in a token of admiration. "I've 'eard tell that the Pomona is able to give away her topgallant-sails to any vessel in 'is majesty's navy; but I don't believe that. I 'ope she's fast enough to ketch that rascally Yankee schooner, that give us sich a settin' down, yesterday, your honor."

Ferris stirred ill-temperedly, as he replied:

"Confound it, Rogers, you needn't remind me of that, all the time. I'm not likely to forget it, without your sticking it down my throat. Yes, I hope she is swift enough to catch the infernal pirate, and I should like to be on board of her when she overhauls the schooner. It would not be so one-sided as the other day, when the scoundrel would not fight me fair; but took to his confounded long guns and cut me to pieces, without giving me a chance to fire a shot, or strike a blow."

Then he turned to the telescope, and gazed at the distant frigate, murmuring to himself audibly:

"She's too far off to signal to. She would not understand what we meant."

Rogers heard him, and barked respectfully.

"Ahem, your honor; I think I could signal to her, if your honor wants it. Your honor ain't used to the flags like I am, and there's a many a one that can see much better than me, your honor, as can't 'old a candle to me in signalin'."

"Do you mean that you can signal to that frigate out there, and make her understand your signals?" asked Ferris.

"Cert'n sure, your honor, and your honor shall see it yourself. What is it your honor wants to say to the frigate?"

Ferris thought a minute, and then replied:

"Tell him that a Yankee privateer is hovering right in sight of the port, and has abducted the Governor's daughter. Can you say all that?"

Rogers scratched his head.

"I ain't sure, your honor; but I'll try. What's abducted, your honor? I ax the question 'cause I never 'eard the word afore."

"Run away with—never mind that, Rogers. Say the schooner is right in front of the port, and will stay here all day, and that if he will sail round under the horizon so that the Yankees cannot see him, he will have a very fair chance of catching her and making a good prize."

Rogers listened attentively.

"I'll tell him all that, your honor; but it will take a long time."

"Start to work at once then, and I will wait!" replied Ferris.

The old sergeant then went to work, with his curious skeleton of wires and laths, and contorted the framework for some half an hour; the aide-de-camp looking on in silence, till at last he announced:

"The frigate sees me, your honor; but she don't seem to understand me as well as I could wish. Howsomdever, she says she'll ketch the schooner (she understands that much, your honor), an' she's a-goin' about, as your honor sees."

Indeed, the captain could see through the glass that the frigate was changing her course.

When first seen, she had been close-hauled on the starboard tack, with the wind at the north-east, and consequently heading to the north. As soon as the communication of the semaphore-man had been made, she let her bows fall off from the wind, and went off to the west, as if she did not intend to land at Kingston at all.

For some time the two spectators watched her, and noticed that she was gradually edging up closer to the wind as she sailed, in a manner that showed that she was acting with a distinct purpose. At first she was "going free," as it is called, with the wind on her starboard quarter, and she held this course for nearly half an hour.

All of a sudden she was observed to shift her sails slightly, so as to bring the wind a little more abeam, or to the middle of the ship. This brought her head to the northwest, and she held this course for another half-hour, at the expiration of which she made another shift of the sails that brought the bows of the vessel again on her original course to the north, and headed her toward a part of the coast to the west of Kingston.

This last course she kept steadily till the watchers in the tower could see that she was getting under the shelter of a point in a line between her present position and that of the American schooner, that still lay idly on the ocean in front of the port, waiting for the Governor to come aboard.

"Tell me, Rogers," asked the officer, earnestly, "if you think that point out there is high enough to hide the spars of such a large vessel as that from the schooner's decks?"

Rogers considered a little, and at last answered:

"I ain't sure, your honor, but I think as 'ow that 'ere pint is cailed two 'undred feet 'igh."

That is enough, Rogers, they can't see her from down there. She will be able to get within a mile of the scoundrels before they do. Such a chance has not come to me in all my life before."

The officer was full of excitement at the idea of what was to happen, and could hardly have patience to watch.

The interest of the situation, however, compelled him to look out sharp, and he saw the frigate haul her wind and make a series of short tacks under the shelter of the shore, in such a manner as not to expose her to the view of the little schooner, that still lay, with perfect unsuspectance, in full sight of the port.

Closer and closer came the great ship, behind the cover of the high projecting point, till all at once she abandoned her former plan and stretched out openly.

Still she did not appear to be noticed on board the schooner till she had made a good mile more out to sea, and Ferris said aloud:

"The lookouts must be all asleep, I think, or they would have found out a sail in sight long ago."

Then, when the watchers began to wonder what was the matter with her, the Saucy Jane seemed to throw off her lethargy and fell off to the wind on the port tack—that is to say, with the wind on the left side of the vessel—so as to bring her head to the eastward, and hoisted her topsails, which she had furled while she was waiting for the visit of the Governor.

"She runs at last!" cried Ferris, exultingly. "Now, my Yankee friend, we will see what you are made of in about half an hour."

They could see that the schooner was lying much closer to the wind than the frigate.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DUEL ON THE SEA.

THE schooner did not appear to be in anything of a hurry to get away from the frigate that was following her, though she spread her sails to flee.

She did not crowd on all she could, but appeared to be trying what she could do in the way of sailing with her ordinary canvas before she tried any experiments on increasing her speed.

The frigate, when she was first discovered from the decks, was about two miles off, and had the disadvantage of being to leeward, so

that she had to steer close to the wind—a point in which a square-rigged ship is always at a disadvantage compared with a sloop or schooner.

The wind, however, was so strong that the ship was able to sail at a greater rate than the schooner, and they could see that the Pomona was steadily gaining on the smaller vessel at every foot of progress.

Still the Saucy Jane did not hurry herself in the least or spread another sail, but kept on her course steadily under fore and mainsail, with her two topsails, a jib and flying-jib, while her staysails and extra jibs were left in the gaskets, as if she did not intend to use them at all.

At last the frigate got so close to her that she yawed from her course and fired a gun at the American vessel.

Ferris, who was watching the whole scene through the glass, exclaimed, as he saw the shot go skipping along the water:

"Fallen short, by Heaven! Do you know what metal the Pomona carries, Rogers?"

The old artillery sergeant replied at once:

"Yes, your honor, certainly. Got the name and guns of every vessel ever was on the station."

And he rummaged through an old memorandum-book, which he produced from one of the drawers in the office, and announced:

"'Ere it is, your honor: Pomona, frigate, carries thirty-eight twelve-p'unders of 'er broadside; a sixty-eight-p'under, carrynade, on the quarter-deck, as a stern-chaser, and six carrynades, of twenty-four p'und, on the fo'k'stle. That's all, your honor."

Ferris began to look gloomy.

"Only twelve-pounders," he said. "Why, confound it, Rogers, that little hooker has a thirty-two-pounder long gun aboard, for I saw it when I was a prisoner."

Rogers gave a dry sniff.

"Wery well, your honor; then hall as I can say won't make much difference. That 'ere frigate ain't goin' to ketch that 'ere schooner, unless the master of the schooner wants to be come up with."

"But surely, Rogers, you don't mean to say that you think that little craft can seriously think of fighting the frigate?"

Rogers sniffed again.

"I ain't sayin' nothin' about that, your honor, but hall I says is this 'ere—if that schooner don't want to be taken, hall she's got to do is to shoot away some of the frigate's spars, and she need not be taken at hall."

As if to verify the soundness of old Rogers's prediction, at that instant the Pomona fired her broadside at the schooner, and they could see the shots skipping over the sea, like a shoal of flying fish, all of them dropping short of their mark in the water.

Then the schooner suddenly threw her bows up into the wind, and, after a short pause, fired her single gun, with a far deeper report than those of the frigate had made, though not in a broadside like hers; and they saw the shot go skipping over the water and strike the frigate square in the hull, entering near the bow and raking the deck diagonally.

"Good shot!" muttered Rogers, with the professional enthusiasm of an old artilleryman; "that feller knows how to sight a gun, by the Lord Harry! That took the frigate plump in the 'ull, and must 'a' killed arf a dozen fellers, if so be they 'appened to be in the way, your honor."

That shot seemed to settle the fate of the chase, for the time being.

The Pomona fired no more; but kept on her course steadily after the impudent little privateer, just as the Belvidera had done, off Sandy Hook, in the sure hope that, when she came up with the American, she would be able to blow her out of the water, with her vastly superior broadside.

So the chase was resumed and kept up for several minutes longer, when old Rogers observed:

"That 'ere schooner is a goin' to fire again, your honor. By the Lord Harry, she'd better do it, or the Pomona will 'ave 'er, as sure as hogs is hogs. She's a gainin' on 'er, hall the time, in this wind."

As he spoke, the schooner, which had been on her course, once more luffed up into the wind, and fired her long gun at the frigate. This time the shot did not skip over the sea as before, and Rogers said, in his sententious way:

"Hel'wation that time, your honor. Sailors is a-lookin' hup, with their gunnery, nowadays. I remember when they never thought of sich a thing as a sight or a hel'watin' quadrant. Used to say they was honly fit for sogers. Look at that, your honor. Missed that time, by the livin' Jingo."

The exclamation was called forth by the splash of the shot in the sea, far beyond the Pomona; showing that the gunner of the schooner had overshot his mark.

The large ship replied with a broadside, and the shots came so close to the schooner, that Ferris said eagerly:

"A little more, and she will be within fair gunshot, Rogers."

"That's what I think, your honor; and what makes me wonder what the Yankee feller can

be a-thinkin' of, to let 'er git so close, without puttin' hup more of his sails."

"Oh, he's an impudent scoundrel, Rogers; and there is nothing he will not do in the way of daring. But he has met his match this time, I hope."

The officer watched the contest through the glass now, with an absorbing anxiety that he did not attempt to conceal.

The frigate was evidently nearing her prey, and the schooner, for the first time since the chase had begun, spread her lighter sails, and began to hold her own a little better than before.

"She's been a-playin' slow, your honor, I'm thinkin'," remarked Rogers, as he watched the chase from the window through the long telescope. "The frigate ain't a-gainin' no more, or if she do, it's honly the least mite in the world."

Indeed, the course of the two vessels had now become more even than before. The frigate sailed faster than the schooner, but, not keeping a course so close to the wind, was constantly obliged to tack, in order to keep near enough to the small vessel to have a chance of using her guns.

Now that the Saucy Jane had spread her light sails, the rate of speed was more equal, while the schooner retained all her advantage, as to the angle she was able to present to the wind.

The great altitude at which the two watchers were placed gave them a view of the horizon that covered a radius of nearly twenty-five miles, and enabled them to see what was going on in the two vessels—as if they had been placed down in a pit, for their express delectation.

They saw the frigate, slowly but surely, drawing nigh to the schooner again, and then the small vessel luffed, and fired her long gun, for the third and last time.

Ferris uttered a groan of inexpressible disappointment, as he saw the effect thereof.

For that shot struck and brought down the foretopmast of the frigate, with the immediate result of throwing her up into the wind to repair damages, while the little schooner skimmed away, totally uninjured.

The English officer uttered a deep curse as he saw the spectacle of wreck which the frigate presented after that successful shot. He thought that the chase was over; but he had forgotten the marvelous powers of recuperation of a man-of-war, with a strong crew and a full supply of spare spars.

Even while they were looking, they saw the top of the Pomona all black with men, and the wreck of the foretopmast was cleared away in a space of time that seemed incredibly short to the lookers-on, till she was sailing away again as fast as ever, and with no appearance about her of ever having been injured.

The captain of the Pomona evidently knew his business well enough to keep on the chase of the schooner, and he continued it right along till the two vessels, pursuer and pursued, grew dim on the horizon, and finally vanished in the limitless blue of the Atlantic.

Then Ferris came down to the Government House, and went in to the broken-down old Governor, to give him the information that the schooner had gone, with Lady Jane; and that there was no likelihood of their ever seeing it again.

He was rather surprised to find that the old earl received the news with indifference, and seemed to have recovered in a measure his equanimity, after the blow which had come upon him.

He was as listless as ever; but did not seem to be stupefied, as he had been in the early morning.

"Gone, is she?" he said, when the aide-de-camp communicated the intelligence. "Well, Ferris, what of it? Suppose we had caught the scoundrel, what good would that have done to Jane? No, no, my boy, she has gone and I shall never see her again. It is settled, and she has gone over to the enemy. Let her go. She is dead to us, henceforth, and you must remember that, when you are asked any questions."

Ferris promised, and the old man seemed to be more satisfied; for it was his pride that had been wounded so severely; and that was comforted by the thought that he could deny the fact of his daughter being alive, till after the war was over, and thus put off, for a time, the dreaded exposure to the ridicule of "those Whigs" that he hated so bitterly and feared so much, on account of their bitter and sarcastic articles.

The Earl of Gowrie was a favorable specimen of the man who has been brought up in the firm belief that the opinion of the small circle of people, that constitute the English aristocracy, is essential to happiness in this world and the next, and that, if one can only keep well with them, the rest of the world can go without heed.

Ferris, on the other hand, had been as much in love with Lady Jane as it was possible for a man of his personal attractions to be; and he was very much cut-up, about the whole affair.

Thinking, in his desperation, that the whole

struggle was over at last, he threw himself on his horse, took a long and rapid ride in the mountains above Kingston, and soon had his beast in a lather of sweat from the way in which he punished it, till he came to a gorge in the mountains, from which he had a good view of the ocean once more.

What was his surprise to see, in the middle of the field of vision, the identical schooner that had been chased out of sight in the southeast that morning, now in the offing in front of Kingston, flying a signal which he recognized as belonging to the English code.

He scoured the horizon for the frigate; but for a long time could not see her. At last he found a speck, down in the southeast, which he imagined must be the Pomona, but it was clearly out of the question for her to think of catching the privateer.

As he watched the Saucy Jane, he saw her tacking to and fro, just as she had been doing when the frigate pounced on her; and it became evident that she had come to the same place as before, to keep the promise made by Blair, the night before, that he would stay in sight of the port "for twenty-four hours."

Ferris could not restrain a certain sense of admiration for the daring of the man who had been his successful rival in the affections of Lady Jane; but he made up his mind to go down to the port at once, to learn what was the desire of the privateersman in signaling in the way he did.

He had an idea that there was something in all that would give him one more chance to retrieve himself with Lady Jane, could he only kill the privateersman.

He rode down in haste, and reached the outskirts of the town in time to see the schooner within a mile of the pier, still flying the signal, while a boat was rowing from her sides toward the port, and already so near that he could distinguish in the stern-sheets the figure of Eaton, the officer who had been second in command of the privateer when he had been captured the day before.

In the stern of the boat was a flag of truce, and the pier-head was full of curious loungers waiting to see what had brought the Yankee back after the appearance of the frigate that, as they all imagined, had chased her away for good, if not captured her; the action which had been witnessed by Ferris and Rogers from the semaphore-tower having been so far off that the people of the port had been unable to know what was going on, except that they had heard a great firing of guns far away in the distance, and had seen the disappearance of the sails of pursuer and pursued under the horizon.

Ferris managed to get to the pier-head in time to receive the emissary of Blair with courtesy, and to ask him his business, as the aide-de-camp of the Governor.

Eaton touched his cap in answer to the salute of the aide, and told him that he carried a letter to the Governor, which he was instructed to deliver to no one else but Lord Gowrie personally.

Ferris, with a stiff bow, replied that, as the Governor's aide-de-camp, he was accustomed to see all of the official correspondence that passed between Lord Gowrie and other persons.

"This letter is not official, but private," was Eaton's reply, in a manner as stiff as his own. "It is a letter from Lady Jane Blair, his excellency's daughter, and if you stop it, sir, you may have cause to regret it all the rest of your life as his lordship will most assuredly."

"In that case, sir," said Ferris, still more stiffly, "you leave me no option but to announce you forthwith, but you must remember that you have come here under a flag of truce, it is true, but also uninvited, and must not expect to be protected by it if your communication is not according to the laws of war."

"Certainly not, sir. I am not asking any favors. You have the right to refuse to receive me, but you should have fired a shot at this boat before she got as near as this if you had wished to warn me off."

"There is no need to warn you off at all. You take your life into your own hand when you come into Kingston to-day, after the piratical way in which you behaved last night," retorted Ferris, hotly. "I would have you know, Mr. Eaton, that if it were not for the person you have on board, I should order you to be taken at once and hung to the nearest tree, as an example to all Yankees of your way of behavior. But, as it is, I have no option but to take you to the Governor."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SURRENDER.

THE passage to the Government House was a gloomy one for Ferris. He felt that he had been discourteous to a stranger who deserved different treatment; but he was so much incensed at the audacity of the privateersman's visit, under the circumstances, that he could not make up his mind to do what he knew he ought to do—apologize. So he passed to the presence of the old Governor without speaking a word to Eaton, and announced the envoy to his chief, without any further ceremony than the words:

"Mr. Eaton, sir—I mean, my lord—from the pirate, to treat for the ransom of another prisoner, I suppose."

Eaton colored high, and retorted:

"If that is a specimen of your British manners, sir, I am more than ever glad that the thirteen colonies threw off their allegiance to the mother country. I am no pirate, and I come to treat for no ransom. I come with a letter from Lady Jane Blair to her father; and after it is delivered I shall hold you responsible for the language you have just used, if you are willing to back it up."

Ferris looked him in the eye and answered, in a tone as haughty at his own:

"At any time you please, sir. I am always willing to oblige a man who wishes what you wish."

The earl had been listening to the little passage of arms between the two young men in the listless silence that had marked his demeanor ever since the escapade of the night before.

He looked at Eaton, as he spoke, in the same vague way, and asked:

"Did you say, sir, that you had a letter from my daughter?"

"I did, my lord. Will it please you to read it, and give me an answer to take back to her ladyship?"

"Where is she now, sir?" asked the old man, in a low voice.

"On board the Saucy Jane, Privateer," was the proud answer of Eaton, who had grown very fond of the little vessel, since she had done so nobly. "The lady is on board a vessel named after herself, my lord; and she is perfectly willing to stay, if your lordship will consent to her marriage with Captain Blair, who commands the Saucy Jane."

The old earl's face blanched as he listened to the privateersman, and he asked in return:

"And suppose I do not consent, sir—what then?"

Eaton hesitated not a moment, but looked the old nobleman in the eye, as he answered him, in a very distinct tone of voice:

"Then my lord will be doing an injustice to his own daughter that I do not think his conscience will ever approve in the future. Lady Jane Blair is on board our vessel, and there are no other ladies to act as chaperons to her. In such a case, my lord, what will the world say to the father who is willing to cast on his daughter a needless disgrace? If the schooner sails without a legal marriage between Lady Jane and the captain, my lord, a stain will rest forever on the fame of your daughter, placed there by her father; and I can assure you, my lord, that we are not the people to let that remain a matter unsettled forever. Will your lordship read that letter, or shall I go back and tell her ladyship that her father refuses to have anything more to do with her?"

The old earl trembled and hesitated; but at last said:

"Yes, sir, I will read the letter. Give me a little time, sir. I am not as young as I once was; and these events have shocked me."

Eaton was struck by the fact that, for the first time in the interview the old man's voice trembled, and the sound smote him; for the tremor told him that the Earl of Gowrie had a heart.

He waved his hand respectfully and retired, while the old noble, with an evident effort, opened the letter that his daughter had sent him from an enemy's vessel, and began to read it.

Ferris, on the other hand, though he stayed back and pretended not to notice what was going on, had an ugly sneer on his face, and could not dissemble his anger and impatience, as he watched the earl. For Ferris was hatching a plot to take the place of those which had failed already, and the letter was a part of the plot.

The old man seemed to be much affected by the contents of the epistle, whatever they were; but, for some time after he had finished, he remained gazing out of the window at the schooner, which was in full sight therefrom, and appeared to be thinking what he should say in answer.

At last he turned to Eaton, and asked him:

"Do you know the contents of this letter, sir?"

Eaton bowed.

"I do, my lord. The letter was written, by my advice, by Captain Blair and Lady Jane."

"And under what circumstances?" asked the old peer, with a look as if he wanted to know the whole thing.

Eaton smiled as he answered:

"Well, sir—I mean, my lord—we were under the guns of one of your frigates at the time, and in order to get a chance to deliver it to you, we had to cripple her, so as to secure our own escape. Then I told Captain Blair that it was certain the whole English squadron must be coming up to the West Indies, and we could not expect to find all their ships as badly armed and handled as those we had met so far. I pointed out, also, that, if we left this port before the expiration of the twenty-four hours we had promised, we might be justly reproached with having exposed her ladyship's reputation to severe damage without any justification.

So we managed to cripple the frigate a second time, and thereby secured about three hours more, for your lordship to decide in. And now, your lordship knows the whole circumstances, I hope to be favored with an early answer; for the frigate is certain to pursue us here, and we cannot expect to be always as lucky as we have been in the conflicts with her."

The old earl stood up, with an expression of great sorrow and humiliation on his face, but said:

"You are quite right, sir; and I thank you for your efforts in behalf of the lady's good name. I will go with you, if you please, on board the schooner, and take the chaplain of the Government House with me. Will that suit your wishes, sir?"

Eaton bowed silently and the old man took his arm, and said to Ferris, with a sort of rueful smile:

"All fights must have an end, Ferris. The Earl of Gowrie surrenders at last."

Then to Eaton, with a courtly bow:

"Lead on, sir. I will go in your boat."

"But is not your lordship afraid to trust yourself in the power of the Yankees?" asked Ferris eagerly. "Would it not be better to order out a sufficient force to protect your lordship in case of treachery?"

Lord Gowrie shook his head.

"No, no, Ferris. Let us be just, even to the devil. These gentlemen cannot mean to show us treachery, or they would not have put themselves in our power for the sake of doing me a personal favor—true, not much of a favor, after last night; but still a favor. No, sir, I have concluded to trust them, and I shall do so."

Ferris bit his lips; but could not make any answer to his chief, and followed him mutely to the port, where the idle negroes of half the town, gathered round the wharf where the strange boat was lying, stared at the Yankees with all their eyes and teeth.

"Do you wish me to go with you, my lord?" he asked, as the old man was about to descend the stairs that led to the boat.

"Certainly, Ferris. I shall want you for my witness," was the reply. "Go for Doctor Jones. Tell him I want him to come with me, and perform a marriage. Send the barge after us."

Ferris bowed with a very ill grace; but went away, to return, in a short time, with an elderly clergyman, who carried "chaplain" on every lineament of his countenance, rosy with good living and full of the milk (punch) of human kindness inspired by plenty of good rum and sangaree.

Doctor Jones was the Governor's chaplain, and had brought with him his bands and gown.

"Ere I am, my lord," he said, in as pronounced a cockney accent as Rogers. "And what was your lordship pleased to want of your humble servant this morning?"

"I want you to come with me to the American schooner, out yonder," was the answer, "and marry a couple. That is all."

Doctor Jones stared at the earl as if he thought that Lord Gowrie was going crazy, and stammered:

"But, my lord, if you please, I—I—I ain't what you may call a fighting man, and they say that schooner is an enemy's vessel."

The earl turned on him with a remnant of his old temper, and said in his sternest tones:

"Doctor Jones, I believe I am the Governor of Jamaica, and you are my chaplain. I order you to get into that boat."

The good doctor was cowed, but had just enough spirit left, to say:

"But I am a married man, my lord, and I've got a family to take care of, besides. 'Oo's a-going to take care of them, if this Yankee chooses to cut off my head?"

"I'll do that myself," cried the earl impatiently, "if you don't get into the boat."

The threat finished Dr. Jones, and he stepped into the boat, which rowed away to the schooner, over the long swells of the Atlantic, calm enough, from the shore; but tossing the little boat about like a cockle-shell.

Ferris got in with his chief, and sat in the stern-sheets, in sullen silence; while Eaton, with a desire to make the trip as little disagreeable as possible to the old earl, talked away as hard as he could, to interest Lord Gowrie; and succeeded in getting the old man to ask quite a number of questions.

Perhaps it was because Ferris was so sullen, that he kept all the sharper lookout for the English frigate. He had the pleasure of seeing her topsails, just rising over the edge of the horizon, and saw, too, that she was coming down, this time, with the wind in her favor, and was likely to give the schooner a good chase.

He kept his exultation to himself, and even his eyes from wandering in the direction of the ship, after the first glance.

The boat rowed on, and at last grated against the side of the Saucy Jane, when the earl was helped on deck, and met by Blair, who greeted him with a grave bow, saying:

"I am sorry, my lord, that I have had to re-

sort to violent means; but I had no option, as your lordship knows, and in time of war all things are fair."

The earl only bowed in the stiffest possible manner, and replied:

"I have come here, sir, not to pass any words, but to save my daughter from a still worse fate than has befallen her. Where is she, sir?"

Blair pointed to the cabin.

"She awaits your lordship there," was all the answer he made.

CHAPTER XIX.

A HURRIED WEDDING.

OF what passed at that interview between father and daughter no one but themselves ever knew the particulars; for Captain Blair left the cabin, and Ferris was detained on deck by the polite privateersman, to ask him questions, and bore him with all sorts of talk, till the Earl of Gowrie was seen once more, at the door of the cabin, to beckon to Dr. Jones.

The chaplain obeyed the gesture with all the alacrity of a parson, in the days when parsons of the English Church were looked on as a species of upper servant in the houses of all great men.

"What was your lordship pleased to want?" he inquired, with all the insinuating deference of which he was capable.

Lady Jane shuddered slightly, and asked her father in a low tone:

"Was there no one else you could get?"

Gowrie knew well enough what she meant. Lady Jane had always had a great contempt for Jones, on account of his allowing his office to be treated with such familiarity and want of respect by all persons, especially her own father. She wanted to be married by some one else, if it were possible; and did not like to say so before the chaplain.

The old earl shook his head solemnly, and answered her aloud:

"Nay, Jeanie, it must be as it is, child. 'Tis thine own fault that thou art not married in a satin gown, and by a bishop. But as thou hast made thy bed, so must thou lie. Dr. Jones will be able to tie thee so fast to this man, that no laws, English or American, will be able to part thee from him till death."

Then the old nobleman turned to the little group on deck, consisting of Blair, Eaton, Ferris and the chaplain, saying, in a sadly dignified manner that gave Eaton a feeling of respect for him:

"Gentlemen, I have the honor to invite you to witness the nuptials of my daughter with the Captain of this vessel, and to sign the document which will be the attestation, in case of any future caviling as to the facts."

Blair bowed low, and preceded the rest into the cabin, where they found that the privateersman had altered the usual aspect of the apartment so that it resembled a lady's boudoir, more than a ship's cabin, and was all dressed with flags.

Dr. Jones took his place, and opened at the marriage-service, without any preliminary remarks.

The opening words—"Dearly beloved"—brought all to their feet, in attitudes of profound respect and attention, and the service went on to its regular close, with a sonorous dignity, on the part of Dr. Jones, that showed how he could do his work on occasion.

When it was all over, the privateersman folded his bride in his arms, and then handed her over to her father, who said as he motioned her away:

"No, sir, no. I claim no further right over that lady. She has chosen her nation and henceforth she is an enemy to her father's country. I desire no further knowledge of the lady or yourself."

He drew back from his daughter with a gesture of something so like aversion, that Blair, with the instinct to protect his newly-made wife, took her arm in his, and retorted, as proudly as the earl himself could have spoken:

"I am thankful to you, my lord, for the courtesy you have shown *your daughter*. As for this lady, she is now *my wife*, and has no need of a nation which, as you say, is now at war with our own. I thank your lordship for your visit."

Lord Gowrie bowed coldly, and, without another word or look at his daughter, went out of the cabin.

Eaton, as he followed, could not help a sly glance at the face of Lady Jane, and saw that it was very pale, and that she had great difficulty in keeping back the tears, in spite of her generally firm and high-tempered disposition.

He went on deck, to find a large boat alongside the schooner, with a number of negroes on board, who were unloading some trunks and placing them on the schooner.

He went to the side and asked the men:

"What trunks are those?"

"Dem's Lady Jane's. Marse Yankee," answered one of the men, with a smirk; "and Cappen Ferris told us to bring dem abo'd, as fass as we c'u'd, fur de wessel's gwine to leabe de po't *stantery*, sah."

Eaton saw that there were quite a number of trunks, and that it would take some time for

the negroes to unload, so he turned his attention to the horizon, knowing that the frigate, which had chased them so sharply that very morning, must be getting close again, and that the lookouts of the privateer were anything but exemplary, when the officers were not on deck to keep them to their work.

Much to his uneasiness, he saw that the Pomona was now within three miles of the schooner, coming down with a fresh wind on her quarter.

Blair, who was still absorbed in a low whispered conversation with Lord Gowrie, was not watching his vessel at all, and there was every probability that they would be caught napping, when Eaton pulled his commander's sleeve, and pointed to the distant frigate, with the remark:

"I fear, sir, that if his lordship does not get off pretty soon, we shall have no time to send him off with any sort of honors."

Blair started, and looked round at the frigate, which he seemed to notice for the first time.

He hurried to the side and shouted:

"Here, you niggers, get out of the way, and let the Governor's barge come alongside."

Then, turning to the Earl of Gowrie, he pursued:

"Now, my lord, we have no time to lose, or I would endeavor to persuade you that you are wrong, to feel as you do, on the subject. I must save my vessel, and my wife, from capture, before it is too late. Allow me to see your lordship over the side into your own barge."

As he spoke he went to the side to look for the barge, and discovered it, nearly a hundred fathoms away lying idly by the schooner's quarter, with the oars all inboard.

"Hallo, you black villains," roared the angry privateersman. "Come up with that barge, and be quick about it. Do you want to be left behind?"

The black oarsmen had been waiting, in true black style, almost all of them asleep, and it took some time for the waking ones to rouse the others, and get the boat alongside.

When it was in a position for the earl to board it was found to be in a condition that shocked the old man so that he flatly refused to go.

Ferris had ordered the barge to follow them but had not taken the precaution to see it cleaned before it was sent out. The consequence was, that there were no cushions in the stern-sheets, and the bottom of the long barge was full of water and mud.

"Tranfer the baggage to the other boat," said Ferris, who seemed to take the matter very coolly, "and let us go in the baggage-boat, while that one brings back the trunks that are not wanted by Lady Jane."

Blair cast one glance at the frigate, now coming down like a race-horse, and rapped out an impatient oath.

"It can't be done, sir, and you know it. Any person that cannot go in that boat goes on board the Saucy Jane. Now, my lord, will you go or not?"

"In that filthy boat?" cried Lord Gowrie with a shudder. "Quite impossible, sir."

"Then I shall have to carry your lordship with me, as I carried off your daughter, and you can blame no one but yourself."

He made no more ado about it; for he saw plainly that there was no time to lose.

The frigate was coming down so fast that she would be in gunshot before he could get under way, if he was not quick.

"Haul your fore-sheet to windward!" he called to the men in the fore-castle, who were watching the frigate with the over-confident air of men who have been spoiled by prosperity. "Right your helm, quartermaster. Look alive there, you fools! Do you want to end your days at Dartmoor prison?"

The schooner became a scene of bustle and confusion in a moment, and the Governor stood as if he did not understand what was going on at all. Not so Ferris. That gentleman, seeing that there was a very good chance that the frigate would catch the privateer at last, was felicitating himself on the little trick by which he had managed to detain the schooner.

Now that he saw that the privateersman was about to set sail without respect to the earl at all, the aide-de-camp bethought himself that he might as well get ashore, as stay within the range of the Pomona's guns; and he was about to skip into the boat, when Eaton, who had been watching him all the time, touched him on the shoulder, and said in a sharp tone:

"No, sir, if the earl does not go, you ought not to go either."

Ferris straightened up to answer, as haughtily as he could:

"That is my business, sir, and I will not trouble you to allow me to attend to it."

He sprung over the side, and the next moment the sound of a gun in the distance was followed by a shot from the frigate, that knocked the spray all over the rowers, and frightened the negroes so much that they began to pull away as fast as they could, without heeding the shout from the schooner.

"Avast there! You hain't got the old man."

The American privateersmen were ignorant of any such thing as rank, and called the Gov-

ernor of Jamaica "the old man" with refreshing democracy.

But the negroes were too frightened to listen to anybody or anything but their own fears. They pulled away harder than before, and the Earl of Gowrie was left all alone, on the deck of the Saucy Jane, deserted by his aide-de-camp and chaplain, with the shots of the Pomona whizzing over him, and the pleasant prospect of being killed by the very vessel that had been sent to be at his orders.

The old nobleman cast one glance around him and realized his position. He disdained to show any fear, though he had never been in action before; but his cheek turned rather pale, as the shot went singing over the schooner, with the peculiar vicious hum of a round-shot from a twelve-pounder.

The Saucy Jane was in worse peril than she had been since she had left the port of New York.

She had been caught napping with a vengeance, and by an enemy who was yet smarting to avenge the humiliating defeat he had suffered that very day, twice over, in his efforts to capture the audacious little privateer.

Blair had got all sail on his schooner, as soon as he saw that he was under the lee of the frigate.

He was in a position where he had to run, without a chance to fire a shot. The frigate was dead to windward, and the wind was strong enough to make her sail like a witch, while the schooner was obliged to go wing-and-wing, at her least successful point.

So away went the two vessels, down the wind, as fast as it would carry them, and the frigate kept firing her bow-chaser all the time, with no result but to dash the spray over the decks, till Blair observed, with an air of relief:

"What a lucky thing it is that John Bull never will learn how to fire a gun! Now, if you were on board that vessel, I am pretty sure that we should have been hit more than once."

Eaton looked at the distant ship in a thoughtful manner.

"I am not sure that we shall not be hit, as it is, before long," he said slowly. "Our only chance is in edging off, as much as we can, without his noticing it, so as to get that which we never ought to have lost—the weather-gage. He is only in long gunshot now, but when he gets a little closer, so as to use his carronades, we are going to have hard work to escape being taken, captain."

Blair looked at the frigate, with disgust painted on his face. "What the deuce had he to do, coming here on my wedding-day to disturb the service," he observed, with an air of great indignation. "I tell you what it is, Eaton; I am not going to let that fellow take me to-day, above all days in the year. Shift the helm, quartermaster, a point, and trim those sheets closer."

Obedient to her helm, the little schooner made a sweep to one side, that took her off at an angle to the course of the frigate. It was not much of a change; but it was instantly followed by the frigate, with a precision and rapidity that caused Eaton to tell Blair—

"We are going to have some credit, if we get the best of that captain: he knows his business well."

Blair set his teeth, as he looked at the British vessel.

"He shall find out that I know mine, before long. If he goes about every time we do, we shall get him under our lee at last."

"He is not likely to do that, sir, while every turn we give to him, puts him a little closer. See there! he will give us a broadside in a moment."

As Eaton uttered these words, the frigate yawned in a way that allowed her to use her whole starboard broadside at once, and sent a tempest of shot and shell whizzing over the waves at the little schooner, that seemed as if it must overwhelm her.

But the chances of a sea-fight are so various that even here, when all seemed hopeless, a wave intercepted more than half of that tempest of iron, and when the last had passed, the schooner had only received three shot through her rail, which had raked along her deck, killed several men—the first slain in battle on the privateer during that war—but had left her powers of propulsion unimpaired, while the frigate had lost some way, from yawing to get a chance to deliver her fire, and was already trimming her sails to follow the Saucy Jane on her new course.

When the Pomona had first been sighted from the decks of the Saucy Jane she had been coming down with the wind on her starboard quarter, and the schooner had made her shift of sails to get the wind more on the beam.

The consequence was that, now that the large vessel was on the same tack as the small one, the frigate retained the power of firing more than her chase guns, as she sailed along, parallel with the schooner.

Eaton pointed this out to his commander, but, to his surprise, for the first time in his acquaintance with Blair, the privateersman answered him sharply, saying:

"I believe that I command this schooner,

Mr. Eaton; and if she is taken, it will be my loss."

Eaton, somewhat offended at the sharp way in which he had been snubbed, withdrew to the lee-rail, and watched the frigate with an anxiety that he could not conceal; while Blair looked at her as if he were watching for some opportunity, that the frigate was to give him, in a minute or more.

"Beat to quarters," he said presently to Eaton. "In five minutes we shall be able to send that fellow about his business. Wait till he fires a shot."

The notes of the drum had not died away over the sea, when the frigate fired another broadside, and this time with better effect than the last. There was great splintering of timber, and the seamen turned pale as they heard it; for it came from the heel of the foremast.

When they were able to see the English ship again, the Pomona was "wearing" to show her other broadside, and Blair gave the order:

"Now, Eaton, you are the best shot in the schooner. I want you to show these boys what a good shot can do, to save a vessel like the Saucy Jane, when there is need of all his skill."

Eaton heard him and his only reply was:

"Where shall I hit him, sir?"

"In the heel of his foremast," was Blair's reply, as he looked at the enemy closely. "He tried to cripple us, and the least we can do is to return the compliment."

Eaton waited till the other vessel had nearly completed the movement she was making with a view to get her other broadside to bear, without losing time in loading. The Pomona was bows on to him, when he at last gave the word: "Fire!"

The gunner applied the old-fashioned match with which guns were sent off in those days, and the ball sped on its way.

They could trace its course distinctly by the line of spray which it raised in its passage, till it entered the English ship's bow.

Blair, who was watching through the glass, exclaimed:

"You did the business, Eaton. I am pretty sure that he will lose his mast, with all that press of sail, inside of—"

Before he could finish his words, the foremast of the English ship was observed to stagger, and in another moment it came down over the bows of the Pomona, in a mass of wreck, and the men of the Saucy Jane raised a hearty cheer.

Blair, as soon as he saw it turned to the men, and shouted:

"Hard up with your helm, let go your sheets. We are safe from that fellow, and I fancy he won't tackle us again; but there is no use in keeping under his guns. Three cheers for the Saucy Jane, and three more for the way she behaves, every time she tries to do the thing properly."

CHAPTER XX.

THE NEW CAPTAIN.

THE chase was over, and the little schooner, by the aid of her one long gun, and Yankee ingenuity in aiming it, had escaped from the greatest peril that had menaced her on her voyage.

The old Earl of Gowrie, who had staid on deck all through the fight, was so much surprised at the result of the action, that he said to Blair, in his most lordly way:

"Sir, I am fain to assure you that you have done yourself great credit this day, and I can at least be proud of the courage and nautical skill of my son-in-law. But the question remains, what are you going to do with me, now that those scoundrels in the barge have deserted me in the base and cowardly manner that they did? I cannot go to America with you, unless as a prisoner, and that would be a breach of faith on your part."

Blair looked at the distant frigate, now wallowing in the trough of the sea, and observed:

"Your boats are not in sight, but if you are not afraid to trust yourself in one of my boats again, I can send you to the frigate under a flag of truce."

"If you will be good enough to do so, sir, I shall be very much obliged to you," was the stately reply of the Governor.

So Blair ordered out the boat, and the old Governor was about to get into it, when he hesitated; and, after a pause of several seconds, said to Blair, in a low voice:

"Be kind enough to tell your wife that I have changed my opinion of things a great deal within the last few minutes, and that, after this war is over, it may be possible for us to meet again in amity. Tell her also that I am not so angry as I seem, but very much hurt."

Blair bowed.

"I will tell her all you say, my lord, unless you would like to see her before you go—"

"No, no," hastily interrupted the earl. "Not on any account. My nerve could not stand the strain, sir. Say so, and bid her—"

His voice sunk to a lower key still, and he added, almost inaudibly:

"My—my—my blessing. God bless you both, sir."

The privateersman bowed low as the old earl

said the last words in a choking voice; and Lord Gowrie was rowed away from the side of the Saucy Jane, and took a straight course toward the frigate, which had already managed to get rid of the lost foremast and was rigging up a jury-mast to take her into port.

There are limits to the power of even a frigate to repair damages; and the loss of a foremast at the part below decks is enough to compel any vessel to go to port, where she can get into a dock.

The boat of the Saucy Jane was manned by six sturdy rowers, and old Folger, the mate, was in command.

As he went away, he waved his hat, and cried out:

"Good-by, boys! We ain't goin' to come back no more, I guess; but if Johnny Bull won't let us out, for fear he won't never git another chance to ketch a Yankee, I hope Cap Blair will sink his darned old frigate for him, and show him that Yankees ain't afraid of no odds."

Then the boat went on its way toward the frigate, and they saw it approach her and put the earl aboard.

There was a long pause, during which the men of the Saucy Jane watched anxiously for the return of the boat; and then they saw it at last, rising and falling in the trough of the sea, as it came back to the schooner.

When it got alongside again, Blair saw that something had happened; for Folger was looking as black as a thunder-cloud, and the men were all scowling, as if they had been insulted.

The Saucy Jane filled her mainsail and hauled close to the northwest before Blair said anything to his mate.

Then he asked Folger:

"What is the matter with you? Did the Englishmen insult you?"

Folger broke out at once with a virulence that showed how angry he was, and how he had been keeping in his indignation before.

"Insult warn't no name for it, Cap. They're the meanest cusses I ever seen in all my life, darned if they ain't! What do you s'pose they wanted to do?"

"I don't know."

"Well, sir, they had the cheek to want to press Sam Fish, as I've knowed fur twenty-nine year, sence he's b'en to sea in ships along with me; and they wanted to swear that he was a Britisher, by gosh, and a deserter from one of their darned old ships!"

"Well, and what did you say to them that induced them to let Sam off from the press-gang?"

"Told 'em, by gosh, that if we warn't let back to the schooner in the same order we came, we'd see if our long gun wouldn't carry fur enough to sink his darned old frigate. I tell ye what it is, Cap: they're afraid of the long gun, you kin bet your boots every time. I b'lieve they wouldn't have let Sam out of their darned old ship, if it hadn't b'en that they was. That last shot of Mr. Eaton's went clear through the heel of the foremast, and they think we can put our shots just where we want them."

"I guess we can, Folger; but, all the same, it is a long fight for one gun, however big, to get the best of thirty-eight. It takes too long to pick the enemy to pieces. And so they let you off at last, did they?"

"Yes, sir; but I ain't so sure they would if it hadn't b'en fur the old gent as was sent to 'em in the boat. He allowed as how they couldn't take anybody out of the boat without what he called a breach of some sort."

"A breach of the law of nations, I suppose."

"Guess so, sir; and anyhow, what he said made 'em give up Sam, though they was hot to take him, and to coax the schooner alongside so as to be able to sink her at one broadside."

"Is that their game, Folger? Well, I am glad I know in time. We won't trouble the gentlemen to coax us alongside. We will go there without coaxing, some day when we are ready to have a fight and no ladies on board. For the present, I think the best thing we can do is to turn our course for the United States, and see what we can pick up on the way."

Folger looked at the British frigate in a revengeful manner.

"Gawl darn their skins!" he muttered. "I'd like to git even with the cusses; but it ain't to be denied that they have got a most monstrous big ship, and it would take a power of hammering to knock it to pieces. Capten, do you know what the British captain called us when we was a-goin' over the side? A gang of pirates, by gosh! We oughtn't to stand that, ought we?"

Blair looked over at the English ship, that was moving off at a slow pace under her jury-mast, and observed in a dry way:

"Well, Folger, if they call us pirates, they cannot but admit that we fought our vessel as well as ever a pirate was fought. On the whole, I think that the substantial results of this affair are with us, and we can afford to let the Englishmen indulge in a little spite, without grumbling over the names they call us. How's her head, quartermaster?"

"Due east, sir."

"Keep her steady as she is, and don't luff any

more than you can help. I want to have the shores of Florida under our lee to-morrow night if we can manage it in any sort of fashion."

The schooner moved off at the same rapid pace she always used to show when hauled to the wind on a taut bowline, and before an hour the sails of the English ship had sunk below the horizon, and the mountains of Jamaica were growing blue in the distance.

Blair then sent for Eaton to the cabin, and said to him:

"From henceforth, Mr. Eaton, I shall trust the Saucy Jane to your care entirely, and look to you for the safety of the schooner. I am a married man now, and I believe that they will not allow any man in the navy to command a vessel so long as his wife is on board."

Eaton smiled.

"I believe not, captain. It is supposed that such a man would be thinking of the safety of his wife all the time, and so might be apt to miss a chance to go into action, when his duty to his country demanded a fight."

Blair nodded his head in a wise manner, and answered:

"They are quite right, Eaton; and I have found it out to-day. I know very well that I ought to have gone after that English frigate, and done my best to take her as a prize; but I swear that I was thinking of my wife all the time, and that made me cowardly. I did not want to go into action. Strange, is it not?"

"Not at all, Captain Blair. I believe that if I had been married this morning, and an enemy was to heave in sight, I should be very much disposed to let the enemy go, and make the best of my way home. There is nothing to be ashamed of in that, sir."

"Nevertheless, Eaton, I know that it is not the right thing for us, when the whole world is looking on at us, to find out whether Yankees have forgotten the days of Paul Jones, to shirk our duty for any excuse, however good it may appear to be. I am the sole owner of this schooner, but I am not fit to command her any more, and I am going to turn her over to you, because I know that you are competent, and I can feel safe under your orders."

The conversation took place in the cabin, and Lady Jane was nowhere to be seen, having retired into her state-room, possibly to weep over her transgressions, possibly in the bashfulness common to all young brides, however proud and independent in disposition.

Blair looked as if he hardly knew what to say to Eaton to excuse his request to the latter to take command of the schooner, but he managed to add after an awkward pause:

"Confound it, man, I've got to comfort my wife after her strange wedding, haven't I? You don't think that a woman can have a wedding like that and not feel miserable over it? I shall want all the time I have for the next three days to keep Jane from pining for her Britisher friends, and if I go to killing them she'll say that I'm a brute and don't know my wife's heart, and all that sort of thing. You don't know Jane as I do, or you would not object to relieving me of the command till I can put my wife ashore. After that, and as soon as the honeymoon is over, I suppose that I shall be like all the rest, and she will be willing to part with me. But in the mean time I must tell her that I am not the captain of the Saucy Jane at all, and that you are a very hard man to get along with in case you are crossed, and that I have concluded to let you have your way in everything, as long as you take me back to the United States."

"That is to say, Captain Blair, that you are about to retire from the sea for the rest of this war, and leave me to command the Saucy Jane?"

"Well, not exactly, but something very like it. I mean that, for the rest of this cruise, you are to be in command, and I am to be a mere looker-on."

Here the privateersman lowered his voice and gazed at the state-room door apprehensively, as he added:

"Confound it, I want to get rid of the responsibility. I don't want to be whipping my wife's relations, and she won't want me to be doing it, neither. But it has got to be done, all the same, and the Johnny Bulls have got to suffer. So I want you to take all the responsibility of the whole thing."

Eaton pressed his hand gratefully as he whispered:

"Captain, Blair, I understand your generosity, and you shall not have cause to regret it if I can help it."

He knew that the real motive of the privateersman toward himself was one of pure generosity.

Blair knew well enough that the younger man was in love—hopelessly but madly in love—with the daughter of an old commodore of the Revolutionary navy, who had been retired from the service a long time before, but had as much enthusiasm for the service as in the heyday of his youth, when he sailed with Paul Jones in the ship that took the Serapis.

Commodore Barton was a chip of the old Paul Jones block, believing in desperate, bull-

dog fighting; the same that had won the Serapis against all odds, in his youth.

Harry Eaton had been engaged to Lily Barton when he was first made a lieutenant, and it was in consequence of the unfortunate affair, between the Chesapeake and the English Leopard, that the engagement had been broken off.

Old Barton had sternly forbidden his daughter to speak to Eaton, whom he called a "disgraced coward" and all sorts of names. In vain had Eaton pleaded for a hearing, till at last the old man sent word to him, that he had no wish to see a coward; but if Eaton wanted to write to him, the commodore, to clear himself from the charges that had caused his dismissal from the navy, Commodore Barton was always ready to listen to any man.

Eaton, on this hint, which he knew he owed to the secret intercession of Lily, wrote to the old man, and told him the whole story of his persecution.

That he had altered the bias of the commodore's mind was shown, a few days after, when the old officer sent him a note, in reply, to give him the only ray of hope that had illumined his pathway since that dreadful court-martial.

The commodore, after a short preface, in which he acknowledged that his mind had been much changed by the perusal of Eaton's proofs of innocence, went on to say:

"At the same time, my young friend, you must not think, that I can, under any circumstances, allow the marriage of my daughter to a man with a stain on his name. No matter by what falsehoods it was placed there, it is *there*, and *must be wiped out* before there can be any union between the families of Mr. Eaton and Commodore Barton. It is probable that, in consequence of the outrage to which your vessel was submitted, a war will shortly spring up between this country and the haughty power that has brought you to disgrace. When that war comes, you may be able to retrieve the reputation you have now lost. Go, at any hazard, if it be in the garb of a common sailor, and gain for yourself a name as proud as that which you had before you allowed it to be stolen from you. Then, and not till then, you will be a welcome visitor at the house of, Sir, very respectfully yours.

"PHINEAS BARTON, Commodore U. S. N."

Eaton had kept that letter with him, all the weary years since the day he got it. He had waited in vain for a war with England, till it seemed as if the American people had lost all their ancient spirit, and would never go to war, for any insult, however gross.

When at last the strife had opened, and he had been refused admission to the President frigate, he had felt as if he never would get the chance of which the old commodore had spoken so confidently.

His heart had sunk within him at the idea of going out in nothing but a privateer—a species of craft that he had been always taught to despise. Since then, however, he had had reason to alter his mind as to the possibility of seeing service in a privateer.

The cruise of the Saucy Jane had not lasted three weeks, and already he had been engaged in two frigate actions, and had sunk one of the enemy's gunboats. While it was true that the schooner had taken no money prizes, except the somewhat questionable ransoms of the English prisoners, she had acquired a great reputation among the English at Jamaica; and Eaton knew that the station, being one of the most important in the West Indies, was likely to have a good many ships there before long, among which the fame of the Saucy Jane would spread, like fire in a haystack.

So the matter was settled, and Blair went on deck, mustered the crew, told them that he was about to give up the active command to Mr. Eaton, whom they would have to address forthenceforth as "Captain," and whose orders were to be obeyed as implicitly as his own had hitherto been.

The men gave three cheers at the end of his speech, as sailors do when they are in good spirits, and Blair said to Eaton, as he went down into the cabin:

"Captain Eaton, to your hands I commit the safety of my wife; and I hope that you will bring us safely to the United States!"

Then he disappeared, and Eaton was left alone on the deck of the schooner, the ocean unspotted by a single sail.

The young man said to himself:

"The Saucy Jane has proved a talisman of luck to one commander. What will she prove to the next?"

He looked doubtfully at the sun. It was very red, and was going down in the midst of a bed of vapor that gave it a fiery appearance. It looked decidedly stormy, and he thought that, if the little schooner were caught in a hurricane, she would stand a good chance of being knocked about a good deal too much for the new bride's comfort.

He ordered the course of the Saucy Jane laid to the east, out into the middle of the Atlantic, and then went down to ask for orders from Blair as to the ultimate destination of the schooner.

He found the privateersman in the cabin, with his arm round Lady Jane's waist, and he thought himself that he should have knocked at the door, and waited a little time before he ventured in.

Blair did not seem to be a bit taken aback, though Lady Jane blushed furiously. Blair said:

"Jane, my love, you must allow me to introduce to you our new captain of the Saucy Jane. Captain Eaton—Lady Jane Blair."

Lady Jane bowed in the stiffest possible manner, and said:

"I thought that *you* were the commander of this vessel, Frank?"

"Only the owner, my love—only the owner. It is not customary for the owner of a vessel to sail her nowadays. He is apt to be too tender of her, especially if he is a *married man*. So I have decided to let Eaton have the vessel, and take her home to the United States, as fast as he can. Eh, Jenny?"

Lady Jane looked as if she did not forgive the intrusive man for coming into the cabin so quickly; but she made shift to say, in a short and ungracious manner:

"Certainly. There is nothing that we can do while there is war, I suppose, except to get out of the way. I should be frightened to death if there were any fighting while I was on board. Promise that you won't allow anything of the sort, Frank. I *insist* on it."

Blair looked at Eaton in an appealing manner, as if puzzled.

The young man understood the look, and immediately struck in:

"I suppose, Lady Jane, you are aware that we are at war with England, and that, if we meet an English ship, we shall have to fight, as we did this afternoon."

"I don't suppose any such thing, sir. I suppose that it is perfectly proper to run away from her, is it not?"

Blair burst out laughing at her simplicity:

"Why, child, it would be a disgrace forever to your husband, if he was to run away from anything but a frigate, like that fellow that chased us to day. If we met any of the small fry, we shall *have* to fight them, or have them go round, saying that the Americans are a pack of cowards. Do you want your husband called a coward, Jane?"

The lady's eyes flashed, as she answered:

"I'd like to hear any one call you a coward, before me."

"They will, child, unless we fight. Come, that is the question of the hour—shall we fight, or shall we run?"

Lady Jane looked, for the first time since she had entered the schooner, a little afraid of the future his words pictured to her, and asked in a low tone:

"Is there no way of getting out of a fight without dishonor, in these times?"

"None whatever, unless one has to run because of having ladies on board. In that case we may as well go into port, and give up our cruise for the future."

It was Eaton who said this, with a grave face; and the lady looked at him, as if she disliked him more and more, for his intermeddling. However, she made no remark beyond:

"Thank you for your information, sir."

Blair nodded to Eaton to get out of the cabin, and soon followed him on deck, when he said to him:

"Now, you see. What the deuce am I to do with her? She will not be happy till we are safe at home, and until I have left the sea. Don't come down for any more orders; but act your own pleasure, and come to dinner as soon as you hear the bell ring."

CHAPTER XX.

"OLD IRONSIDES."

THE Saucy Jane was flying along, the next morning, at fifteen knots an hour, under a gale from the northwest, that had replaced the Trades, about midnight.

The schooner had got out of the region of the regular breezes that waft the mariner softly along, for weeks at a time, as in the first voyage of Columbus, till it seems as if storms were things that ought never to be talked about in tropical seas.

She was in the latitude of the Bahamas and rapidly nearing a hurricane, to all appearance.

Eaton, muffled up in a watch coat that showed how the temperature had changed since the day before, was pacing the quarter-deck and watching the horizon, when the lookout at the mast-head called out:

"On deck there! A sail on the weather-quarter!"

Eaton turned round to see where the sail could be that had missed his usually keen sight, but could see nothing.

He hailed the top again:

"Whereaway is that sail you talk about? I see nothing."

The lookout called back:

"On the weather quarter, sir. A large ship, hull down from here. Guess you can't see her from the deck."

"What do you make of her?" asked Eaton.

"Guess she's a Britisher, sir," was the reply of the lookout, as he squinted over to windward. "She looks like a man-of-war, sir."

Eaton turned to Hackett, who was pacing the deck beside him.

"Take the deck, while I go to the mast-head,

Mr. Hackett," he said. "I want to see what kind of a vessel that is."

He took the captain's glass and mounted the rigging to the lofty perch, where the lookout had taken his stand on the cross-trees of the schooner, and was swaying to and fro with the motion of the vessel as she plunged through the heavy seas that were constantly threatening to overwhelm her and as constantly passing harmlessly under her keel.

Up there on the cross-trees the view was much more extended than down on the deck below.

One could see over the crests of the waves, and the prospect was by no means a cheerful one.

The seas had an ugly look. The color of the water was very dark, and the whole surface of the ocean seemed to be a tossing confusion of wave-crests and nothing else in sight.

It was some time before Eaton, with all his practice at lookout work at sea, could find the object that had attracted the attention of the sailor at the mast-head. At last he fixed it in the glass, and saw that, as the lookout had said, there was a ship in sight on the weather quarter of the schooner, with all the appearance of a man-of-war.

She was coming down toward the schooner with the advantage of the weather-gage, and bid fair to overhaul her in a very short time, at the rate at which she was going.

The young commander of the Saucy Jane was a little disturbed at the fact that the stranger was a man-of-war, a conclusion that he came to from the trimmings of the yards and sails in view.

The strange vessel had only her topsails spread to the wind, and her top-gallant yards had been sent down on deck, a sure sign that she was no merchant vessel, but a well manned ship.

And in those latitudes it was pretty certain that any vessel that made its appearance was an enemy.

The schooner had been stripped to her fore and mainsail, both closely reefed, and was plunging in a manner that prevented any exhibition of speed on her part.

She was going fast enough, but she had to go up and down so often that her forward progress was not great.

And the strange ship was coming down as if the seas did not affect her.

She towered over and plunged through them at a great rate, and was coming up with the Saucy Jane at every plunge.

Eaton did not leave the mast-head till the strange ship had got so near the schooner, that he could see plainly she was a large frigate. Then he went down to the deck and ordered the small drummer to beat to quarters.

In the midst of a storm, increasing every moment, which threatened to develop into a hurricane, the crew of the little privateer went to their quarters with a steadiness that won from Eaton the comment:

"Well done, boys. No men-of-war's-men could have done that better. Don't cast loose the gun, till you get the order. We can afford to let the other fellow begin the action this time; if he wants to have anything to do with us."

The men replied to this speech with a hearty cheer, and the schooner rushed on her course, followed by the big stranger, till the latter was plainly visible from the deck of the Saucy Jane.

All doubt that the frigate was an armed vessel was removed, inside of half an hour, when the stranger was seen to yaw slightly from her course, and the flash of a gun from her bow-port, was followed by the hum of a round shot over the masts of the schooner, so close that more than one of the men crouched instinctively and Eaton remarked to himself, not having any one else to talk to at the time:

"That fellow shoots too well for an English frigate."

He had spoken aloud, and the words were hardly out of his mouth, when Blair came running up the companionway, and called out, with every mark of anxiety:

"What is it, Eaton? Who is that?"

Eaton was saved the necessity of answering.

The gun had hardly been fired, when the stranger yawed still more, so as to display her whole side and the crew of the Saucy Jane burst into a tempest of cheering the moment they saw her spanker-peak.

For there, in the midst of the gray sky, the first time since they left the port of New York, they beheld the Stars and Stripes on the peak of an American frigate! Blair yelled louder than any one else at the sight, and Eaton called to the quartermaster to send up the ensign at once, to show the American frigate, whoever she might be, that it was needless to fire any more shotted guns at such a vessel as the Saucy Jane. The answering flag was greeted from the frigate by a series of signals, which were translated into the demand:

"Show your number, or heave-to, till we send a boat on board."

"We have no number," said Blair, who was hanging around, as if he did not like to have nothing to do, spite of his recent disclaimer of command, "What will you do, Eaton?"

"Let them send a boat, of course, captain. If they want to do it in such a sea, they are welcome. I don't want to send out any of our men."

So the schooner was brought to the wind, and the great ship came swooping down on them with a rapidity that seemed amazing, after the way in which they had kept ahead of her before, and showed how fast the vessels were going.

As she passed them, a boat was dropped from her side, in a manner that showed that she had a well trained crew; came dancing over the waves like a cockle shell; caught at the quarter of the schooner with the boat-hook, and set on board a young officer, who walked up to Eaton, saying:

"Commodore Hull's compliments, sir—"

Then he stopped and started back, with the exclamation:

"Why, bless my soul, Eaton, what in the world are you doing here?"

Eaton colored high. It was the first time he had met any of his old naval friends, since the day he had gone over the side of the Chesapeake, after the court-martial.

The officer who had boarded the privateer was his old friend and messmate, Lieutenant Vanderwerk, an old Knickerbocker scion, one of the few men who, after the unfortunate result of the court-martial, had said publicly that he "thought Eaton had been treated with injustice," and that he "was certain that he was no coward, whatever else he might be."

And now it was Vanderwerk who was shaking Eaton's hand with great fervor, and saying:

"Why, Eaton, old fellow, how are you, and how in the name of wonder did you come here?"

"I am the commander of this privateer," said Eaton, coloring with pleasure at the sight of his old friend. "The owner, Captain Blair, has just been on a cruise to Jamaica, and has picked up a wife from the enemy. We are now going home to the United States to land the lady, before we do any more cruising. What ship is that, Van?"

Vanderwerk laughed heartily.

"Well, well, and is it possible that you don't know the old barky in which we both received all the training we ever had. Why, man, that's Old Ironsides, the ship which made the Bey of Tripoli take in his horns; and, what is more, she has not finished her history yet, by a good deal."

Eaton gazed for one moment at the vessel that had had such a glorious history already, and was destined to become the most famous ship in the American navy.

His eyes filled with tears, in spite of himself; and he turned to the crew of the privateer and cried out:

"Boys, three cheers for the CONSTITUTION!"

The vessel rung with the shouting of the Americans, and the men of the Constitution looked over the side and answered the cheer with a will, as they saw the neat decks and realized that the schooner was not an Englishman in disguise, as the captain had imagined at first, and for which he had sent Vanderwerk on board with his boat's crew.

Blair had kept in the background when the American officer came on board; but now Eaton introduced him to his old friend, with a great deal of pride, as his owner and commander.

Blair greeted Vanderwerk with hearty cordiality, and invited him to dinner; but the lieutenant told them that his orders were to return to the Constitution, as soon as he had satisfied himself that the schooner was what she claimed to be.

"For the commodore is a very wary old man," he said; "and he could not believe for the life of him that a Yankee vessel of such small size could possibly be bold enough to venture into the middle of the enemy's cruisers as you have done."

"Enemy's cruisers," echoed Eaton. "Why, we have seen but one, all the time, since we left New York. We were in company with the President and United States, and we chased the Englishman till the frigates gave up, and we got out of the way in disgust, to look for prizes in the West Indies."

"Nevertheless," his friend assured him, "there are a number of English ships abroad on our coast, with the express object of catching the President, in revenge for that chase; and we have had several brushes with them already. You had better look out sharp for them. Well, Eaton, I should like to stay with you for a good long chat; but the commodore is getting impatient, and I must be off. Good-by, old fellow, and remember that I shall take pains to tell every one I meet where you are, and what you are doing."

Eaton pressed his friend's hand warmly; for he knew what the other meant. Vanderwerk had always believed Eaton unjustly punished, and now he was going to do all he could to influence public opinion in his friend's favor, by exalting the exploits of the Saucy Jane to the utmost.

When Lieutenant Vanderwerk went over the side at last, he left behind him one heart, full of relief and thankfulness, in Eaton's bosom.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BRITISH SQUADRON.

THE gale that had caught the schooner off the Bahamas lasted for three days, and drove the little vessel out of her course into the middle of the Atlantic ocean, where she was buffeted about like a chip in the rapids of a mill-stream.

She had not the resisting power of a large ship, and her rig was not meant for such storms; but, for a schooner, she behaved with such stoutness that her men became prouder of her than ever; ready to swear that the Saucy Jane could face a hurricane, and live through it, without shipping a drop of water.

The pumps were sounded at the end of the gale, and the schooner was found to be as dry as a bone. She had not strained a single seam. When Eaton announced this to Blair, he found the owner of the privateer in the cabin, attending to his wife, who had been much frightened during the storm, and very sea-sick.

Eaton had cause, very soon after his arrival in the cabin, to bless the forethought of Blair in turning over the command of the schooner to him before the storm set in; for as soon as Lady Jane heard that the captain was in the cabin, she came out to scold him, with such persistence, that Eaton, who had admired her for her beauty, blessed his stars that he had not married a woman, however beautiful, with a temper like her dictatorial little ladyship.

"I want this schooner put on her way to the nearest land, *at once*," she told Eaton, as soon as she could get out of her state-room and present a respectable appearance, after her severe trials. "I want the vessel sent back *at once*, sir. I cannot remain in this miserable condition any longer. I have nearly been dying for the last three days, and it is *infamous* that you can't find *some* way to put things into a better shape, when you have a woman on board."

Lady Jane was evidently a spoiled child, and had been so used to having her own way, that it was a novelty to her to find herself in a position where she could not command every one she saw.

Eaton stood his ground with sufficient firmness to say:

"I hope your ladyship does not think that the vessel has been run into this gale with any malice on my part. I assure you that it is just as unwelcome to me as to you, and that I am getting out of the way of it as fast as I can."

Lady Jane looked at her husband, and saw that he had a smile on his face that he could not repress, at the notion of her complaining to Eaton of a storm which was beyond his control, and the look made her answer in a more mollified tone:

"Well, I suppose that you cannot help the storm—"

"I assure your ladyship that the storm comes and goes without asking leave of any one, even the King of Great Britain and Ireland."

"Well, I know that; but what I don't know, and want to know is this, when are we going to get to America?"

"That I cannot tell your ladyship, at this moment; but, as soon as I have worked out the dead-reckoning on the chart I shall be able to, say, within a few miles, whereabouts we are; and, if I get a look at the sun, to-day, I can make the thing certain."

Lady Jane looked wise, and answered the young officer with a great deal of dignity:

"Very well, sir; when you have ascertained the place, I wish to know *just where we are*, and when we shall get to our home. I am tired of this kind of life."

Blair gave Eaton a rueful look as he went out. It was the look of a man who, having been a happy bachelor, finds himself, for the first time in his life, subject to the dominion of a person who cannot be reasoned with, but who is wholly governed by feelings. Eaton shrugged his shoulders, and went on deck, thinking to himself as he went:

"Poor Blair! It is not always prize to a marry an earl's daughter. What a difference in my Lily."

The morning after the storm was a cloudy one, and no sight of the sun was obtained till after the meridian was passed, which made it necessary to take two sets of observations, and to wait for over an hour, before the last set, which decided the position of the vessel, was taken. During this whole time Lady Jane Blair was sending out messages to the young captain by the steward, asking, "when he would be finished," and "when he would be ready to tell her what she wanted to know," till Eaton in his impatience, sent back word that "he would let the lady know when he was ready, and that he wished that she would remember that he was in command of the schooner, responsible for her ladyship's safety, and that he could not perform his duty properly, unless he was left alone when he was taking the sun."

This quieted her ladyship for a time; and,

when Eaton had finished his calculations, he went down to the cabin, and put the chart on the table, saying:

"Here, Lady Jane, is our position, and you can see for yourself just where we are. We are in the middle of the Atlantic ocean, and it will take us at least a week of fair winds, or a three-days' gale, to get back the ground we have lost during the past storm."

Lady Jane looked at the chart with dismay, after she had found out, by poring over the figures, that the schooner was at least two thousand miles from land and out of the track of vessels, as indicated on the map; but she made shift to thank Eaton for his courtesy very gracefully, and seemed, from that time, to have overcome her first dislike to the sea, and even to be gradually acquiring a liking for it, as the days rolled along and the breezes that followed the storm wafted them toward the American coast.

It was a time of year when the Atlantic is given to light winds and baffling calms, and the Saucy Jane, which had come the distance, with a gale behind her, in three days, was detained for more than a week, out of sight of land, till, one morning Eaton was able to announce to her ladyship that he hoped to show her land by the next noon.

The news actually drew a sigh from Lady Jane, who observed to her husband:

"Well, I declare, I shall be sorry to leave the little schooner that has brought us so safely. But where shall we land, Captain Eaton?"

"We are in latitude—" he began.

"Oh, I really beg your pardon; but I don't understand in the least about latitude and longitude," said the lady, with a saucy curl of the lip. "Be good enough to tell me what place in America will be nearest to us, when we first see land?"

"Somewhere near the city of New York, Lady Jane."

"Thank you, sir."

And with that, Lady Jane went on deck, and passed the rest of the afternoon in watching the horizon for any symptom of land, and asking her husband, every second minute, whether such and such a low fog-bank on the water was not "land at last."

But the land never comes to the impatient, any quicker than the winds will carry the vessel in sight: and Lady Jane was doomed to disappointment that day.

The hours rolled on, and the heat increased, with a light breeze from the northeast, and a good deal of fog on the face of the sea, when the lookout called down to the deck:

"Sail ho!"

Lady Jane uttered a cry of astonishment.

"Where in the name of goodness? I can't see anything."

Blair pointed out to her, just emerging from a bank of fog in the south, a largeship, "under easy canvas," as it is called, with her topsails and topgallantsails set, and her mainsail brail up, hanging in graceful folds.

"That is the same vessel we spoke of at the beginning of the gale, Jenny," he told his wife. "That is the Constitution; a regular Yankee frigate, my love; if you never saw one before."

The English girl gazed at the strange vessel with much curiosity.

Lady Jane was still an Englishwoman in all her prejudice; though she had run away with a Yankee. She had heard a great many sneers at the Constitution, which had been stigmatized, in British publications, as "a bunch of pine boards under a bit of striped bunting, not fit to stand before one of his majesty's ships for a moment."

Something of this, perhaps, was in her thoughts, as she said to Blair:

"What a pity it is, that she will have to be captured, and taken to London! She is such a pretty ship!"

Indeed, the Constitution was a remarkably handsome ship, in those days of bluff bows and clumsy models.

She was gracefully molded, and her lines were fine for a frigate; while there was an appearance of majestic strength about her, that had already given her the name she was to make so famous, "Old Ironsides." As she came out of the fog, she was moving very slowly, the wind being so light as to be almost imperceptible; at times sinking to a dead calm.

The sails of the Saucy Jane were spread to their utmost capacity, but she was hardly moving, though she was a vessel meant to show her best points in light winds.

The winds that day were too light even for the Saucy Jane. When they first sighted the Constitution she was moving under the influence of a "cat's-paw," which carried her forward with deceptive rapidity, but failed after a little and left her motionless on the sea. A little later the same or a different "cat's-paw" caught the schooner and drove her forward in the direction of the frigate.

The Constitution hoisted a signal, which Eaton read from the signal-book to be the number of the frigate, and he replied with the name of the Saucy Jane, spelt out with a good deal of trouble. Then the two vessels continued to ap-

proach each other in the light winds till they were near enough to speak.

As they came together the head of an officer was put over the side of the American frigate, and he demanded:

"Is that the Saucy Jane again? Who commands her now?"

"The same person as before," replied Eaton, looking up. "Is that you, Van?"

"Ay, ay," was the response in the voice of his friend. "How are you, again? If you will come on board and dine with our mess, we shall be very happy to entertain you, Captain Eaton; and Captain Hull authorizes me to say that no one on board the old Constitution has any idea that you were treated with anything like justice in your trial. Will you come on board?"

Eaton flushed slightly at the speech.

Lady Jane Blair was on deck, and she opened her eyes wide at the speech of Vanderwerk.

He even saw her turn and whisper to her husband, and the hot flush of shame came to his cheek, to think that this odious trial was to come up to him at every turn, to curse him just when he was beginning to think that it was all forgotten.

He managed to answer constrainedly:

"Many thanks, old fellow; but I cannot leave my schooner. I am the only navigator on board, except the owner, and I can't expect him to do my work for me."

Here Blair interposed with his usual kindness:

"Go on, man, if you want to see your friends. I can take care of the schooner for a little while. There is nothing to do in this sort of weather except to keep the sails from banging to slats in the calm. Go on and see your friends."

Thus urged, Eaton had no resource but to consent, and in a little while after he was standing on the deck of the Constitution and had his hand clasped by more than a dozen of his friends of old times, all seemingly anxious to assure him that they felt for him and respected him as much as ever.

He was so much overcome with their kindness that the tears came into his eyes, and he could hardly speak for a minute.

But when he was hurried aft to the poop, and brought into the awful presence of the captain, he felt ready to sink through the deck with confusion; for in Captain Hull he recognized one of the members of the court martial which had found him guilty of cowardice on the testimony of perjurers, and he was surprised beyond measure when the captain held out his hand, and said, in the frankest manner:

"Mr. Eaton, I am glad to see you on board the Constitution, and to assure you that, if you go on as well as you are doing now, the time will come when I shall be only too happy to join in a petition to Congress for the reversal of what I now think was a most unjust sentence, sir."

Eaton could hardly believe his ears; but the kind pressure of the old captain's hand convinced him that he was awake, and he made shift to say, in a faltering voice:

"I am sure, sir, that I hope that it may come; but I have given up all confidence on the subject, sir. I thank you for your good will in the matter."

Then he was carried away by the officers, and made a guest at their table, in all the style of which a frigate's gun-room was capable in those days, when manners were simpler, and salt provisions the bulk of what was consumed at sea.

To Eaton, who had been so long away from the scenes in which he had passed his early years, the change from the little schooner was very striking. Not that the Saucy Jane was in any way a worse vessel to live in than a frigate, but the mere matter of size was in the frigate's favor; and she had but lately been in port, so that there were fresh vegetables on board, of which the gun-room officers were sure to have their share.

So they had a jolly time at dinner, in the gun-room of "Old Ironsides," and all hands were pledging Eaton's restoration to the navy-list with honors, in a few months, when the pipe of the boatswain on deck was followed by the hoarse shout down the hatchway:

"ALL HA - A - ANDS!!! ALL HANDS MAKE SAIL!!!"

Vanderwerk jumped up with an oath:

"Confound it! the old man has got another connoption, I guess. I swear we no sooner get comfortable than it's 'all hands something or other,' and I don't believe there is the least use for the whole thing. Come on, boys!"

For with all his grumbling, the lieutenant was one of the first on deck. There were no shirks in "Old Ironsides."

Eaton, who imagined that the call of "all hands" must mean wind coming, went on deck to look after his own craft, and saw what had caused the commotion on board.

There were four sails in sight, and in those times a sail meant an enemy.

There was no more appearance of wind than before; but out in the northeast there was a thick bank of fog.

The crew of the Constitution were hauling the light sails to the top of her long, slender skysail masts, with every yard extended out to

either side by the stunsail booms, to expose the utmost surface of sail possible to the action of the wind.

Under this cloud of canvas, which was swaying and flapping to and fro overhead, with the noise of distant thunder, the frigate was moving through the water perceptibly faster, and the little schooner was gliding about three cable-lengths ahead of her, with all her light kites set.

Captain Hull, on the quarter-deck of the Constitution, was looking through a ship's glass at the horizon, shifting the telescope from one sail to the other, with an anxiety that he did not seek to hide.

His face was set and stern, as if he realized that a great test was coming to his ship; and it must be remembered by the reader that not a single victory had, at that early day, been won from the English, who were still glorying in the name of Nelson, and calling themselves invincible on the ocean.

Eaton at once took his leave of the officers, and hurried back to the privateer in his boat. He did not want to be left on the frigate at a time when the enemy was in sight of his own vessel.

For it was certain, to his mind, that the sails in sight were those of English ships, from the way in which they acted.

When he first saw them, they were coming out of the fog with all sail set, and within ten minutes after the first sail was descried, there were five in sight, all of which had the appearance of being men-of-war.

Four of them were ships; one was a brig; the last the nearest of any; but all heading toward the Constitution from all points of the compass, with their sails trimmed to catch the wind at the angle which would bring them down on the American frigate.

When Eaton got on board the Saucy Jane, he found Blair in a great state of suppressed excitement, and as the young officer reached the deck, the warm-hearted privateersman grasped his hand, and whispered to him:

"Now, Eaton, is your chance, my boy! You are in sight of the navy fellows, and you have full swing. Here we are, and the Johns have got to suffer to-day. There is a whole fleet of them, and if the Saucy Jane can only manage to get one of them a prize, you can hold your head up with the best of them."

The privateersman, in his enthusiasm, actually imagined that what he said was true.

Eaton, who was cooler, said to his owner quietly: "The question to-day, Captain Blair, will not be as to our taking any of the enemies' vessels, but whether we shall be able to save our own bacon, and whether the Constitution can escape capture."

Blair looked incredulously at Eaton.

"Man alive, you don't mean to say that you think any such thing? Why, I should be ashamed to give utterance to such a thought, even if I entertained it. I'll bet on Old Ironsides, every time, to fight or run from any British ship floating."

"It will be run to-day!" quoth Eaton dryly.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN THE TOILS.

THE hunters had closed around their game, as they thought; and the result of the chase was no matter of doubt to them, in their over-sanguine anticipations.

The vessels in sight on that 17th of July, 1812, were the Belvidera, that had escaped from the President and her consorts, with the loss of all her anchors, a few weeks before; the Shannon, 38, to be made memorable, two years later, by the capture of the always unfortunate Chesapeake; the Guerriere, 38, that was to yield herself to old Ironsides, not long after; the Eolus, 32, and, last but by no means least, the Africa, a 64-gun ship, that came lumbering along behind the rest, always slow but always to be feared, when she got near enough to make herself felt.

Eaton, in the schooner, saw that, in the light winds that were likely to prevail for the next day or two, the Saucy Jane was in no danger from the frigates.

With her fine lines and great spread of canvas she could take advantage of every shift of wind, and pursue it to the uttermost; while the great ships would not be moved more than half the distance by the same puff. Moreover, the schooner had a strong crew, and was able to pull sweeps, with a rapidity great enough to take her out of harm's way. The only thing he felt afraid of, was that the squadron might put all their boats out, to carry the schooner by boarding; in which case the Saucy Jane, with only one gun, might stand a very poor chance.

Therefore, to put them out of temptation, he resolved to get out of the way, and directed the crew to get out the sweeps and pull with all their might out of the radius, within which, it was plain, a drama was about to be enacted of unusual interest.

Slowly, but with a rate of advance that excelled that of all the ships, the Saucy Jane moved out of the dangerous circle that was

closing round the Constitution, and found herself within long gunshot of the Belvidera, as she passed the line of the British squadron. The temptation was too great to be resisted, and all the men of the privateer grinned, as Eaton gave the order:

"Clear away the long gun, and let that frigate have a taste of Yankee impudence."

The Belvidera was the leading ship of the Englishmen, that were now straining every nerve to catch the Constitution, and as she passed the schooner, she fired a gun to windward and showed her colors.

"Load the gun carefully. I will sight and fire it myself," commanded Eaton, and his orders were obeyed without comment, other than the delighted grins of the men, as they tugged at the tackles of the long thirty-two.

The water was as smooth as glass, and the swell was so slight as to be hardly perceptible, when the Saucy Jane was allowed to glide on, at the command: "Avast pulling!"

The little vessel glided along for a few cable-lengths, before the gun was arranged to suit Eaton.

Then he took a long, thirsty look through the sights, and stepped back from the breech, giving the final order:

"FIRE!"

It was the first gun fired in anger that day, and the shot went skipping over the water, till it struck the Belvidera full in the waist, and Blair remarked to Eaton with a grin:

"I guess that frigate will get to knowing us, after awhile, Eaton."

The bold action of the little privateer was greeted from the Constitution with a round of cheers, that came over the calm sea for near a mile and a half, and brought the flush of pleasure to Eaton's face, as he reflected that his actions were being watched by the men, of all others, on whom it was necessary, for his future, that he should make the impression he was making.

As soon as he had fired his long gun, he gave the order:

"Give way on those sweeps and make all you can, boys."

The men pulled on the sweeps as hard as they could; but the schooner had not fully gathered way on her after her shot, before the frigate sent her broadside at the impudent little craft, with a spitefulness about which there was no mistake.

Every shot came as if it had been sighted carefully; but only one struck the Saucy Jane on the quarter, and that one dropped off into the water, and left a dent behind it, that showed it to be only a spent ball, without strength to penetrate the timbers.

That settled the status of the Belvidera, and Eaton took up his position a little further off again, and sent another shot at the ship, with an effect as great as before.

Of course the shot called forth a reply; but, as the missiles fell still shorter than before, the privateer might have gone on to pick the frigate to pieces with impunity, had she not been interrupted by the report of a long gun from another quarter of the horizon altogether, and found that, in eagerness to watch the Belvidera, the lookouts had neglected to keep their eyes on the other ships of the English squadron, and that the huge Africa, with her two decks and heavy battery, had crept up within long gun shot of the Saucy Jane, and had fired a shot that came within a foot or two of cutting her stern frame in half.

In fact, the sound of the shot fairly frightened the men.

It came, with a whizzing and groaning hum, that told it to be of the largest size and Eaton remarked to Blair:

"The sooner we get out of the range of that sort of thing the better it will be for us. That was a forty-two."

Blair looked uneasily at the huge bulk of the two-decker, and said:

"I hope she has no more of that sort of gun on board, Eaton. I don't want to be sent to the bottom on my wedding-trip."

At that moment the lookout called down:

"Here comes a shift of wind, sir."

Eaton looked over the water, and saw the dark streak of ripples that announced a "cat-paw," coming down on the schooner's quarter.

The head of the little craft was pulled round to meet it at the most favorable angle, and the next minute it struck them, and filled the sails with a bang that threatened to snap the masts, so suddenly did it come.

The schooner shot ahead with a rapidity that gave her pursuers no chance to take another such a steady sight as they had had before; and the shift of wind lasted long enough to take the Saucy Jane out of gunshot of the Africa, at the same time that it deprived them of any further chance of annoying the Belvidera.

The aspect of the chase now changed considerably. The wind was becoming more baffling every minute. Now it would come with a rush from the north, and send the British ships on toward the Constitution, with a rapidity that threatened to bring them all within gunshot of the frigate at the same time, and give them the weather-gage. Anon it would change, as sud-

denly as it had come, and desert them, while it filled the sails of the American ship.

At last it began to grow dark, and the breeze slackened to a dead calm, under which circumstances the sun set.

There was no moon that night, and the Saucy Jane kept on her course till the darkness had fairly closed in, when she went off to the south, with a view of getting out of the range of all the English ships, if the morning should bring wind with it.

Blair had come on deck, very uneasy on account of his wife, and was talking to Eaton about going into New York in the morning, as they could easily do, if the wind did not shift and blow hard against them, when the bright light of a rocket, from one of the English ships, illuminated the horizon for a moment, and they saw it replied to by three rockets from the Africa, far astern of the rest of the squadron. The enemy were signaling to each other.

Soon after this they saw the rigging of the Constitution set with lanterns, and Blair read from the signal book, the words:

"Keep in sight as long as you can, and try to cripple some of the enemy's ships."

"The captain don't seem to hesitate to ask favors of privateersmen, I notice," observed Blair, dryly. "I suppose that we should be quite justified, by all the customs of war, in running our best to the nearest port, and telling the folks that the Constitution was a prize to the enemy, but the old man knows that a Yankee sailor won't desert a brother in distress, as long as he has a shot in the locker. Hey, Eaton?"

"I am glad to hear you say so, Captain Blair, because I was about to say to you, that I could not, in justice to you as the owner of the schooner, stay in the vicinity of this affair any longer. Do you give me leave to stay here and get the schooner sunk or captured, perhaps, to help save the frigate?"

Blair never hesitated a moment.

"I not only give you leave; but I tell you that I never shall forgive you if you don't do it. Those Johnny Bulls have got to be taken down, sooner or later, and now is as good a time as any."

The fogs came down on the schooner soon after this, but Eaton had taken the precaution to ascertain the bearings of the Constitution before she had disappeared, and he ran down with his sweeps through the fog, and managed to get under the frigate's stern without being fired at in the dark, and hailed her.

The way in which the hail was answered showed that the crew of the Constitution was in excellent discipline; for there was no confusion, as might have been expected, but a low voice asked:

"What vessel is this?"

Eaton was surprised to find that the hail came from the water, and that the schooner was surrounded by boats, not noticed in the fog, showing that "Old Ironsides" was not going to be caught napping that night.

The hail of the boats was answered, and Eaton went on board the frigate to see the captain, and get any instructions that he might have to give, in case of misfortune to the Constitution.

He found Captain Hull in his cabin, poring over a chart that showed the depth of water all along the coast of North America, and the commander looked up and greeted him with a cordiality about which there was no mistake.

"I am glad to see you on board my ship, Mr. Eaton," he said, "and I hope you will not take it amiss if I presume to give you some requests, although I know well enough that you are in no sense subject to any orders of mine."

"On the contrary, Captain Hull, I shall be only too proud to be intrusted with any orders that you may be disposed to give me, and I promise to perform them faithfully."

Hull pointed to the chart and said:

"What I want you to do is this: One of those vessels in sight at sunset was a brig; and some of my officers insist that she is our own Nautilus, that we had before Tripoli, and that had such a glorious history there. I can hardly believe this; but Mr. Finch, who served on board of her at Tripoli, is certain that it is the Nautilus and no other."

"Then she must have been captured," exclaimed Eaton impulsively. "Poor little Nautilus! What a fate, after all her deeds in Tripoli! Captain Hull, do you wish me to take her back to-night?"

Hull looked amazed at the idea.

"My dear sir, by no means. I could not take the responsibility of ordering any man on such an errand as that; but this I will say, that, if I could ascertain beyond a doubt that the brig in company with the English ships is the Nautilus, a British prize, my mind would be more at ease than it is. I should know the worst, and that would be a relief."

"I will find out the fact for you, captain," said the young man at once. "Have you any further instructions to give me, before I go?"

Hull hesitated a moment and then said:

"Mr. Eaton, if you should find that the Nautilus has been taken, I have a further request to make of you. She had, at the time of her de-

parture from New York only three days ago, some passengers—one of them a lady. Those passengers are friends of mine. One of them is old Commodore Barton, and the other—Why, good Heavens, Mr. Eaton, what is the matter with you?"

For Eaton had risen from his chair, and was gasping for breath, as he asked, in low tones: "Did you say Barton, sir? Not Commodore Barton? And you say a lady. For God's sake don't say it is *his daughter*!"

Hull stared at the young man in surprise. "Why, yes. Is it possible that you know him and her?"

Eaton crushed back his emotions, to answer, as quick as he could:

"Captain Hull, I was engaged to Miss Barton, before my whole life was blasted by the verdict of the court-martial, of which you were a member. Sir, you shall have the news you seek, before morning; and you can depend on one thing, that, if it is possible to take back the Nautilus, it shall be done this very night. Good-night, sir."

Wit out any more ceremonious leave-taking, he rushed out of the cabin, and took his own boat again, to the Saucy Jane.

When he got on board, he asked Blair whether he could see him a moment, and then told him the whole story of his hopes and fears. He asked only for permission to take a boat, and go through the fog, hunting the Nautilus.

"And when you find her, what are you going to do with her?" the privateersman asked, in the driest of voices. "You don't surely expect to take her, with a single boatful of men? No, Mr. Eaton; I am not overburdened with scruples as to the prudence of an expedition, as you are aware; but there are limits to even my rashness. I shall not allow any such foolhardy exploit as that. You are the skipper of the Saucy Jane, and your place is on board of her, to take care of my wife and myself."

Eaton groaned. His repulse was so different from what he had experienced from Blair, who had been kindness itself, that he did not know what to do, and burst out:

"But, my God, captain, *she* is in danger, and may be in worse peril if I cannot help her. What am I to do?"

Blair gave a dry sniff as he retorted: "Well, that's a pretty good one, to me. What shall you do? Why, of course, we must take back the Nautilus, and the young lady with her."

Eaton looked at his commander with so much bewilderment, that Blair burst out laughing, and cried:

"Why, good Heavens, do you suppose that Frank Blair would let the man whose coolness won me my wife, go out in a boat on a night like this, in the midst of an English squadron, when I can go with him, and help to see fair play? No, sir, if you go, the Saucy Jane goes with you, and my wife shall say yes to that. Here, Jenny, Jenny, Lady Jane Blair, my love, and all the rest of the titles, come in here, and let us talk to you, about a love affair of Mr. Eaton's."

The door of one of the state-rooms opened, and Lady Jane Blair, as beautiful as ever, came out, with a pretty little frown on her face, to say pettishly:

"Frank, I wish you would not be so ridiculous. You can call me any name you please; but I will not have my title thrust at, and made fun of in the way you have got into lately. What is the matter?"

Blair told her and asked: "And now, Jenny dear, tell me what we shall do? Are you afraid to stay in this schooner, while we are fighting or not? If you are—"

Lady Jane interrupted him unceremoniously to say:

"Am I afraid to stay in your vessel while there is fighting? I like that—upon my word, I do! As if I hadn't been on board her already, through all the fighting you have had! No, sir; I am not afraid to be in any place you are, and you know that as well as I do. Go on and do any fighting you have to do without reference to me. I am only your wife now, and of no importance."

"But, Jenny," said the privateersman, coaxingly, "remember that if it had not been for poor Eaton here, you would never have been my wife; and here he is, with the young lady he is engaged to in the hands of the enemy, and all he wants is leave to go and take her away from the Johnny Bulls—I beg your pardon, my dear, I mean the British government—just as I ran away with you. Then, another thing you forget—that if we manage to get back Miss Barton from the enemy, you will have a friend on board the schooner, and you two women can keep each other company when we are on deck."

The argument evidently mollified Lady Jane's temper, and at last she said, in an ungracious sort of way:

"Well, I suppose we shall have to give Mr. Eaton a chance to make a runaway match as well as ourselves, Frank. Do as you please; but if the schooner gets taken by those Johnny Bulls, that you were talking about just now,

don't say I didn't tell you to keep away from them."

Lady Jane could not help the last remark for the life of her; and Blair cried out, with a laugh of great amusement:

"Why, my dear, you surely don't suppose that the Johns can take the Saucy Jane, any more than they could rob me of my wife? No, no, my love; all the Johnny Bulls this side of London can't do that. We are going to succeed to-night, and you can write that down for a certainty, Lady Jane Blair, my dear."

CHAPTER XXIII. CUTTING OUT.

THE night was well spent when the watch on the captured Nautilus (in charge of a prize crew from the Shannon) being then in the midst of a dense fog, called the officer in charge to acquaint him that a boat was coming to the prize from one of the ships in company.

At this time, the English squadron was clustered pretty close together, with a view to speaking purposes; and no one knew exactly where the Yankees were, except that it was supposed that they would try all they knew to escape under the cover of darkness.

The British officer—a young lieutenant—was on deck in a minute, alert and ready for orders, expecting to be sent off to St. John's or Halifax with the prize, to give the frigates full swing at the American ship they were so anxious to capture.

The last thing in his mind was that any of the Yankees would have the audacity to think of venturing into the midst of the English squadron.

The fog lay over the water in dense folds, and the calm was absolute, when the watch first called the commander of the prize, and the only sign of the vicinity of any other ships was the occasional flap of a sail, as a flaw of wind struck it and made the blocks rattle in the sheaves.

Lieutenant Everton was full of enthusiasm in his profession, and had a very good prospect of rising therein.

He came of a good family, which is a great thing in the English navy, and his father had influence in the Admiralty.

He had a fair prospect of being placed in command of the prize, as soon as she should have been condemned and sold to the Government; and the Nautilus was a very swift little brig, and would be re-armed as soon as she got to St. John's.

She had lost all her guns in the chase in which she had been taken, when the weather was heavy and the large ships had had the best of her; but in light winds, such as those that prevailed that night, she was more than a match for any ship in the squadron. In fact, unknown to Lieutenant Everton, the Nautilus, under the occasional puffs of wind, had forged a long way ahead of all her consorts, and was alone with the Belvidera for her nearest neighbor.

The young officer listened to the sounds that had attracted the attention of the lookout, and finally observed:

"That does not sound like a boat, Connell. There is no noise of the rowlocks, though I hear the dip of oars. It sounds to me more like sweeps. Let me see; is it possible that any of those Yankee coasters can be poking about in the fog, thinking that there is nobody here? If so, we shall distinguish ourselves by making another capture."

Connell was an old boatswain's mate, who had been put on board the prize, on account of his age and experience, to take care of the young man.

He touched his hat, although it was too dark to see the salute, which was made in the instinct of old discipline, and answered his youthful commander:

"Not very likely, your honor, if I may make bold to say. I think your honor will find that it's that 'ere Yankee schooner that 'ad the impudence to hopen fire on the Belvidera this mornin'."

"Oh, nonsense, Connell," retorted the lieutenant, incredulously. "I'll admit that he was an impudent little beggar, because he had a long gun; but that is rather too rich. The idea of his bringing his little craft into the middle of this squadron! Why, we should eat him up without salt."

Connell's only answer was:

"Does your honor 'ave any objection to makin' a signal that the frigates will 'ear, so as to make sure that there ain't no sich thing about? I wouldn't like to be caught nappin', your honor, and we ain't got enough men aboard to make a fight, if so be the enemy does try to take us in the dark."

Everton laughed.

"Oh, confound it, Connell, I don't like to make any signals, in case it should turn out that I had got frightened without any reason. Let us hail the boat, or whatever it is that is coming; and then, if the answer is suspicious, we shall be able to hail the Belvidera."

Connell's answer was to put his hands to his lips at once and roar at the full stretch of his powerful lungs:

"Boat ahoy! Who are ye, and where are ye goin'?"

There was a cessation of the sound of oars, and an answering hail came back from the fog:

"Ay, ay, what ship is that?"

Before Connell could frame an answer, Everton called out:

"None of your nonsense there, or we'll fire on you. Give your name and number at once, do you hear?"

The answer from the fog was delayed this time longer than before, but it finally came:

"Ship ahoy! What ship's that?"

The sound of oars had ceased entirely, and Everton shouted out in answer:

"His majesty's brig Nautilus. Who are you?"

No answer was returned to his hail, but a voice was heard in the fog, crying out in low, but excited tones:

"Give way, boys; that is the brig!"

The dip of oars was audible in the fog once more, and Everton, with too late a realization of the fact that an enemy was really approaching, called out in haste:

"All hands to repel boarders! On deck, all of you! QUICK!"

Connell repeated the cry, and, running to the hatchway, roared down at the full stretch of his lungs—boatswain's mate's lungs at that:

"All hands! All hands to repel boarders!"

The next few minutes were a chaos of confusion. The weak prize-crew of the captured brig, awakened from their slumbers by the cry of the boatswain's mate, came hurrying up the hatchway ladders, all in a turmoil of haste and excitement; to hear the dip of oars in the water, closer and closer every instant, and the tall spars of the schooner, Saucy Jane, came driving through the fog, above the side of the brig.

Ill fared it then with the English, that the American captain of the Nautilus, in his efforts to escape from the British squadron, had thrown all his guns overboard, and that none had been put on the prize, when she was given to Everton.

The Englishmen had been only a boat's crew, in one of the Shannon's cutters, and numbered less than twenty, all told.

They had the arms with which they had left the ship, pistols and cutlasses; and they managed to open a feeble fire, as the schooner ranged alongside.

But the Saucy Jane was handled by a man who had been in such expeditions before, and her crew were in excellent discipline. They crouched below the bulwarks of the schooner, till her bow passed over the waist of the brig, when, with a ringing yell, they sprung up and made a simultaneous leap into the rigging of the Nautilus, and came swarming over her bulwarks like a swarm of bees, stinging hard with cold steel, but not firing a shot.

Eaton, aware that, the less noise he made, the less he was liable to incur the interference of the large ships, all round him in the fog, had prohibited any pistols being taken by the boarders, and depended on the rush and the confusion of the enemy for his victory.

He had not reckoned without his host. The Englishmen were half-beaten before the fight opened, by the nervous tremors of sudden waking, and uncertainty of the enemy they were to confront. Everton and Connell knew or suspected; but the rest had not even seen the schooner, before she came crashing into the midst of them; and her men came over the bulwarks in a rush that aided to complete their demoralization.

Inside of three minutes, they began to run below, and the men of the privateer were in full possession of the Nautilus.

Everton and Connell, who had resisted the first rush manfully, were both down, wounded severely; the lieutenant insensible from a cut over the scalp, which he had received from the hands of old Hackett, who had followed Eaton in the first onset of the boarders. Connell had suffered even more severely; for he had been spitted through the body by a pike, sent, in the fashion of a harpoon, by the long arm of Folger, who had been called "the best harpooner in the island of Nantucket" when he had sailed with Blair on the whaling voyages that had formed the captain's apprenticeship to the sea.

In short, the capture of the Nautilus from the British prize-crew was effected by the Saucy Jane, with even more ease than the first capture by the British themselves, when she had been chased by the whole squadron that was now around her in the fog.

When it was all over, Blair, who had followed his friend into the brig, with the intention of doing what he could to help, observed, with a light laugh that told of his relief:

"Well, by heavens, we are well out of that, Eaton! I thought Johnny Bull would have given us more trouble than that. Go ahead and find your girl, and I will see to things on deck. Hurry up; for we don't know how many of the frigates may be snooping round after us, in the shake of a lamb's tail, as my poor old father used to say."

Eaton pressed his hand gratefully. The permission was just what he desired, and yet he had not dared to ask for it. His duty as the

commander of the schooner was to see to the carrying off of the prize as soon as possible.

But, as Blair had taken that labor off his hands, he was at liberty to go below, which he did at once.

His steps led him to the cabin, and he found a light burning there, that made him think there must be some one on board.

He called out:

"Hullo, in the cabin! any one here?"

There was no answer for a minute or two, and he repeated the cry, when he heard a rustling, as of a woman's dress, and the door of a state-room opened.

The stalwart young sailor, who had never quailed before the storm of battle, and who had kept his head erect under the still more crushing load of a public and unmerited disgrace, now trembled and could hardly command his emotions, as he saw the figure of a lady emerge from the state-room, and beheld before him, at last, Lily, "his own Lily Barton," as he had so often fondly called her, in the days when yet misfortune had not come upon him and her.

She was very pale, and looked as if she had been weeping, and was still under the influence of fear; but it was the same Lily as ever, and she recognized him in a moment, and said, in a low, stifled voice:

"Oh, Harry, you are here at last! How thankful I ought to be that you did not come when it was too late."

Something in her words shocked and alarmed him, for her face looked as if she meant to convey to him bad news.

"What is it, Lily?" he asked. "Your father—was he on board when the brig was taken?"

She bowed her head, and answered, in a choking kind of way:

"Yes, yes, he was—and he was so much excited that he tried to fight, as the English came on board—and then—and then—they—they—"

"What? Good Heavens! You don't mean to say that they hurt an old man like him?"

Lily nodded her head, and wept openly at last, as she said:

"Come and see him. It is not too late yet, thank God!"

She did not seem to be in the least astonished at seeing her lover.

Her only thought seemed to be for her father.

Eaton, hardly knowing what to say or do, followed the girl into the state-room from which she had emerged when he first entered the cabin. It was the captain's cabin of the American *regime*, and was furnished with a hanging cot and all the comforts of a man-of-war commander who can afford to have handsome things about him.

In the middle of the cabin, on the cot, with his face so ghastly pale that it was plain that death was approaching rapidly, lay Commodore Barton, whom Eaton had not seen since the fatal court-martial; though he had corresponded with him, as the reader has already been informed.

The old man lay there, with his eyes closed; but there was a smile on his lips as the door opened, and he murmured faintly:

"I heard it, children. I heard ye both. It is Harry; is it not—Harry Eaton?"

"Yes, commodore," the young man himself replied. "I have come to take you back home again, sir. The Nautilus has been retaken from the enemy, by the American privateer, Saucy Jane, of which I am commander. You are safe, sir, and we shall be in New York by tomorrow, at eight bells, if you wish it."

The old man slowly turned his head and opened his eyes, so as to take in the young one.

He smiled faintly, as he said, in a reflective way:

"There is no coward about him, Lily, is there? He has won back his name, has he not?"

In spite of the painful circumstances which surrounded the poor girl, a deep blush suffused her face at this plain demand; but her father went on, without waiting for an answer:

"Ay, ay, Harry, I was hasty with thee, and I should have waited for the facts, before I formed my opinion; but old men are apt to be obstinate, you know, and I was the same as the rest. My boy, you have stood the test, and won Lily fairly. Take care of her, for I shall not be able to do that much longer."

"But you surely are not hurt so badly as that implies, sir?" the privateersman asked; for the old man's voice was getting quite strong in its sound.

Commodore Barton smiled faintly, and replied:

"I know what they did to me, boy, and I bear them no grudge for it. I never struck to an English ship when I was at sea, and it was too late in life for me to begin at three-score-and-fifteen. I drew on the officer in command, as they came on board, and cut him on the head. 'Twas a foolish act, and I could not grumble that he struck back at me. But he was young and strong, while I was old and feeble. Time was, when I might have been able to best him; but that time passed long ago. He ran me through the body, and I cannot have many more hours to live. Look, if you doubt it, my boy."

He made a feeble motion to throw off the

covers; but Eaton, who was well acquainted with wounds, helped him, and closely inspected the old commodore's hurt. He found, as the old man had said, he had been run through the body, not far from the heart; the left lung having been pierced, as was attested by his labored breathing; and that the wound had been hastily bound up, with a pledget of lint, over the hole made by the weapon, kept in place by sticking-plaster. The blood had ceased to flow, showing that the wound had been made some time before; but the most alarming symptom was the weakness of the patient. He was unable even to lift his hand, though his voice sounded strong and clear.

"I can hardly believe that you are as bad as you think, commodore," the young man began to say, to cheer the old one up; but the veteran interrupted him again, with the words:

"Nay, nay, boy, I know ye mean well, to comfort the old man; but my sands are run out, and 'tis but a few hours, more or less, that I have to live. Let me know, before I go, that you have no animosity against the old man, Eaton. I was too proud. I could not bear to have people point at the verdict of that court; but I knew, all the while, that the real coward in the case was myself, because I was afraid to do my duty, and face the scorn of the world in a right cause. Do you forgive me, boy?"

Eaton's voice was choked with tears, as he answered the old sailor:

"God knows, commodore, that I never blamed you, for your action. You gave me hope, when all the rest of the world said that my career was ended forever. Forgive you? Sir, I would to God that I could be forgiven for all my sins, as I forgive you for anything that you were compelled to do against me."

The dying commodore put out his hand on the coverlet of the cot. He could not raise it; but made shift to slide it along; and Eaton, understanding the action, put forth his own, and took that of the old man.

A faint pressure of the fingers was all that the commodore could manage, to express his gratitude to the young man for his generosity, and then he turned his head to his daughter, and his voice grew suddenly faint, as he said:

"Quick! quick, Lily! I have not long now, child. I feel it coming. Give me thy hand."

Not understanding the full significance of the request, the girl put her hand in that of her father, and the old commodore said, in a voice that was hardly audible by the time he finished:

"God bless ye—both—children. Eaton—stick to—the old flag. The—old—the old—f—f—flag."

That was all. The factitious strength that had supported the dying commodore through an interview that would have been an exhausting one at the best of times, had finally extinguished the feeble taper of his life; and, before Eaton could realize it, the death pallor had spread over Commodore Barton's face and the veteran was dead.

But Lily was by his side, and the girl, in her grief at the sight, that she also understood, had instinctively turned to her lover for consolation, and was weeping bitterly, with her head in Eaton's bosom.

It was just at this juncture, that both were startled by the deep boom of a gun, in the fog outside; and the hurrying step of Blair came down into the cabin, while his voice called impatiently:

"Eaton, Eaton, where are you? The enemy are beginning to look out for us, and we have got to get out of this at once."

Eaton placed the weeping girl in a chair, whispering:

"I will be back in a moment. I must attend to my duty, before my feelings."

"Go, go," was her whispered reply. "I shall be better in a little. But don't let them leave him, all alone, in this ship, now."

"I will return, and I promise that the body shall be taken to our own country," he hastily replied.

Then he rushed out to where Blair, with a face that indicated the keenest anxiety, was pacing up and down the cabin, waiting for his comrade.

As soon as he saw Eaton, he rushed at him and dragged him on deck, saying in great excitement:

"You shouldn't have staid so long, man. Confound it! I have been in love, myself, but you take the longest time to bill and coo, of any man I ever knew."

Eaton stopped him by a simple gesture toward the cabin, as he answered, in the same guarded tones that had been used by the privateersman.

"Blair, don't say any more. Commodore Barton lies dead in that cabin; he died with his hand in mine."

Blair looked unaffectedly shocked by the intelligence.

"You don't say!" he exclaimed. "Well, that is bad; but it is the way of the soldier and the sailor alike. We have work to do, or I am very much mistaken. Did you hear that gun?"

"Yes; where was it?"

Blair pointed over the quarter of the schooner,

and on the other side of the brig, still lashed, as she had been when she was first boarded. The fog was as dense as all over the rest of the horizon; but the privateersman said with perfect confidence:

"Over there. They fired just now. I have had the schooner's head kept straight with the oars, all the time you were down stairs, and I am sure of my bearings."

"And are you sure that the gun was over in that direction? Was it a shotted gun or a signal?"

"A signal, I think— Ah! Look at that!" The flash of a gun illumined the fog again, and the sound of the report echoed from bank to bank of the mist, like thunder in the heart of a cloud. The sound was very deceptive; but not so the flash. That came from the direction Blair had said, and it was followed almost immediately by another and another, as if the English vessels were hunting in the mist, and firing the guns to guide each other.

Eaton turned to Blair.

"Has the brig got enough sweeps to make her way through the water, think you?"

"Not a single sweep. She is a good hundred tons over our schooner, and I suppose that the dock-yard authorities thought she was not fit to use them."

"Then, captain, I fear that we shall have to abandon or destroy her. We cannot get her away without sweeps, and we shall have all we know to get the schooner out of the hobble, before the morning lifts the fog."

Blair only answered:

"Captain Eaton, the schooner is in your hands. Do as you think best in the matter. We are all ready to obey your orders."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE LAST OF THE NAUTILUS.

Eaton took his resolution at once to abandon the Nautilus, for two reasons: First was that he had just given to Blair, and the other was that he wanted to get Lily away from the brig; and out of the painful associations that were connected with it.

He trusted that the girl, in the absence of the scene in which her father had met his fate, would learn to bear it more easily.

Besides, he felt sure that it would be much harder to get the body of the commodore away from his daughter, without a scene, on board the brig, than on the schooner, where Lady Jane would be ready to take a certain degree of charge of her, and help to divert her mind. So he ordered the men to go into the brig at once, and bring out all on board which would pay for the cost of moving. To a special party he gave special orders, to take charge of the body of Commodore Barton.

Then he went down to the cabin, and found the girl in the state-room, by the body of her father, weeping silently.

As soon as she saw him, she rose and asked: "What were those guns, about? Is there any danger that his poor body will be taken from us? Oh, Harry, you will not allow that, will you?"

He came up to her, and put his arm around her, saying, softly:

"Lily, darling, you must be firm, for I have something to tell you that may pain you. There is danger of our capture, if we do not immediately leave this brig. I have given orders to take the commodore's body on board the schooner, with proper honors; and I will see to it that he is properly interred, as soon as we get out of our present danger. All I wish you to do, is to go with me to the schooner, and be introduced to the wife of my owner and commander. We will see to the rest."

Lily seemed to be very grateful for the idea of meeting one of her own sex; for she immediately rose, and said, with a poor apology for a smile:

"Ah, Harry, I am in no mood to be introduced to any one; but if she is a woman, she will surely be kind to me, at this time, of all others. Take me where you will."

Eaton offered his arm without more ado, and had the satisfaction of seeing the men, waiting, outside the cabin, for the body, and that they appreciated the sorrow of the young lady, from the way in which they behaved.

The rough sailors stood out of the way, as their commander led Lily Barton across the deck, and made no pretense of hiding their looks of sympathy. Even Lily saw that they meant her well, and she bowed her head as she passed the gangway through an avenue of sailors, and stood on the decks of the privateer, at last, in safety.

Blair was in waiting at the gangway, and he advanced to the girl, to say quietly:

"Lady Jane is in the cabin, Mr. Eaton; and I have told her of the position of Miss Barton. She will receive you, and you need not trouble yourself to introduce them formally."

So saying, he led the way to the cabin, and, opening the door wide, called out:

"Jenny, my dear, if you please, the young lady is here. Miss Barton will occupy the state-room with you, till we get to port."

Lady Jane, with a wrapper on, came running out to meet the friendless girl, and, with-

out a word, clasped her in her arms, and led her off into the cabin, when Blair drew Eaton away with him to the gangway of the schooner, and said:

"You did well, Eaton. I did not see the lady's face; but I congratulate you, that your love troubles are over at last, as you helped me out of mine. Now let us go to work to get the best of the Johnny Bulls. I am never so happy as when I am circumventing them. What do you propose to do with the brig, now we have got her, and have no chance of carrying her off?"

Eaton considered a little.

"I don't see what we can do, captain, except to scuttle her, as soon as we have got all that is worth saving. It will be something to beat the English out of a prize, that they thought themselves sure of. Here comes the body of the commodore. Where shall we put it, sir? I ask for orders, as I do not like to give them, without being sure that you do not object."

"There is but one place for it, and that is by the cabin door, with the flag over it. Do you want to take it to the land with us, and have it buried there, or do you wish it buried at sea?"

"We must go to land, captain, if you have no objection. I took the liberty of promising the lady that I would see her father properly buried. I do not like to ask the favor; but if—"

"Say no more, Eaton. I was, as you are aware, going to New York as soon as I could, and this is only another reason. Put the schooner's head there, sir, whenever you wish, and act your discretion in the matter."

So saying, the privateersman turned away to the gangway, and to hurry the men on board, to give Eaton a chance to collect his thoughts, while the transfer, from the brig, of all portable property and prisoners, was going on with great rapidity. When it was over, and the English lieutenant had been brought on board and bestowed in the cabin, on a cot, with his wounded head, there only remained Connell, who had died while they were bringing him on board. His body was hastily cast in the sea, with a shot at the feet, and then Eaton went on board the brig himself, to perform the task of scuttling the once glorious little vessel, in which he had served, as a boy midshipman, detached from the Constitution on the coast of Africa. It was to him a very painful duty; and had it not been for the fact that the Nautilus would be retaken by the British in the morning, as soon as they could see to find her with the boats of the squadron, he would have tried to bring her off. As it was, he had no alternative but to destroy the unfortunate little hooker, and with a heavy heart he took an ax down-stairs, and began to hack a hole in the planking of the side, just above the floor.

Eaton was a skillful ax-man, and he soon had a great gaping hole in the side of the brig, through which the water came rushing so rapidly that he had to run from the place to avoid getting wet through.

In less than three minutes after, the Saucy Jane was moving away over the seas, with the brig settling.

Something in the spectacle fascinated the sailors of the schooner so much that they stopped pulling, and allowed the schooner to drift with the tide as they gazed.

"Poor little thing!" said one sailor. "She looks as if she were a callin' to us to come back, and look at her for the last time. It's a shame we had to do it, but the cap'n he knows."

So they watched the spectacle in the fog, as the misty outlines of the ill-fated brig slowly faded from sight. At last came a pitch forward of the tall masts and a heave of the hull, as if the poor thing had been making a last struggle to keep above water.

The Nautilus, as a seal taking a dive, went down into the depths of the Atlantic, and was seen no more.

Eaton gave a heavy sigh as he saw the last of her, for he had served in her himself; but there were too many things still hanging on him to give him time to indulge in any vain regrets; and he turned to his duties with a zeal that speedily erased from his mind all thought, except of what the future had in store for him, of a sweet and consoling nature.

The schooner was swept along for the next hour in the direction in which they judged the Constitution must be lying, unless a shift of wind had carried her thence. When they had pulled along till Eaton judged he must be about there, he determined to lie by for the night, inasmuch as the further he went in the mist and darkness the greater became the uncertainty of everything.

The sails had been sent down and lay idly on the booms, to offer the minimum of resistance to the atmosphere while the schooner was using her sweeps, but they were hoisted again and left to swing, while the watch was set for the night and the rest of the men sent below to sleep.

They were ordered not to undress, and to be ready to go to quarters the instant they were awakened. Then the schooner sunk to quiet again, and silence brooded over the ocean.

Eaton himself, too anxious to sleep with the

safety of all hands resting on him, paced the deck till the first streaks of dawn lighted up the clouds. Then, as if the coming of the light had caused it, a fresh breeze sprung up.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE HUNTING OF OLD IRONSIDES.

THE sails of the Saucy Jane filled at the first puff, and she shot ahead as if she had been impelled from the mouth of a cannon, for the space of nearly a quarter of a mile, when the last breath failed and she lay becalmed again.

But the mist had rolled off into the north, and the whole of the English squadron was seen in a clump, as the ships had passed the night. "Old Ironsides" was still about the same distance she had been, when night closed in.

The nearest ship, as before, was the Belvidera, and the Africa was the furthest away. But what showed that the English were in earnest, was the fact that they had hoisted out all their boats, and were towing the ships toward the Constitution.

They evidently hoped to take her from the number of boats they had out. On the side of the American, a squad of boats was also visible, as if the captain had determined not to give up. The Saucy Jane was in no immediate danger, being out of the radius of fire from all the vessels, and capable, in the light flaws of wind that came ever and anon, of holding her own and a little more, in point of speed.

And now commenced a chase that has immortalized the name of "Old Ironsides" and Hull, from the steadiness and skill with which it was conducted by the enemy, and from the constancy and resource that were shown by the men and officers of the frigate.

Eaton, in the privateer, was able to watch the whole game with safety, and to follow the English ships at a respectful distance, to obey Hull's signal to "keep as near the enemy as possible, and to cripple any of them he got a chance at."

For the whole of that day did the English squadron pursue the Constitution, and for the whole day did the Americans tow their ship, under every disadvantage.

The English, having such an immense superiority of force, were enabled to put all the boats of the squadron on a few ships, and to draw ahead with so much rapidity, that, at one time, the Belvidera got within gunshot of "Old Ironsides" and opened her fire.

And the worst of the matter was, as Eaton perceived very early in the fight, the Constitution was unable to return this fire as well as his own little hooker had already done. He watched her through the glass, and saw that, at every shot she fired out of her stern-windows, there was trouble of some sort. What it was, he knew well enough, from having been on board of the famous old ship as a boy, and seen her try to use her stern-chaser before.

The fact was, the vessel was not built by the American shipwright to run away at all, and the stern of "Old Ironsides" had so much rake to it, in nautical phrase—in other words, overhung the water at such a sharp angle—that, at every shot fired she threatened to blow the whole stern-frame out, and set the cabin on fire.

Presently, however, in some mysterious manner, that Eaton could not explain to his own satisfaction, the great frigate glided away from her pursuers as easily as if she had been sailing under a five-knot breeze, and to his still greater astonishment, the boats, that had been towing, were called alongside, and actually towed by "Old Ironsides" herself, in return for their late services. As for the Belvidera, that ship could not reach the Americans with her twelve-pounders, after this mysterious manœuvre had been started; and the frigate did not pause till she had gained a full mile on her pursuers. Then Eaton, who was watching through the glass with all his eyes, saw how the little trick had been executed, as "Old Ironsides" stopped again.

A boat was being pulled from the frigate, keeping well under her bow, and on the other side from where the British were still tugging away at the oars, to bring the Shannon near enough to open fire.

This boat pulled away rapidly, and Eaton could see she was paying out a long rope. Watching still more attentively, he saw the plunge of some body into the water from the boat, after which the ship, in the same mysterious manner as before, glided off, as if she moved by witchcraft. A sudden thought struck the young man, and he called to the quartermaster to bring the lead and find out how many fathoms the schooner was in. They were out of sight of land at the time; but, when the lead was thrown, the depth was found to be only about twenty-two fathoms, and the trick of the Yankee frigate became easily explicable. Hull had sent away all the rope he had to spare in the ship, and had dropped a kedge into the sea, after which he had clapped all his men on the rope, and run the ship away, at four miles an hour, before the English could see how the thing was done.

When Eaton announced this to the crew

of the Saucy Jane, there were, as usual, three cheers for the Yankee nation in general, and "Old Ironsides" in particular. The sharpness of the trick struck the keen Yankee intellect with a force that compelled admiration, and, from that moment, there was no more anxiety, on board the Saucy Jane, as to the fate of the Constitution. They knew that she would get out of her scrape safely, and it seemed as if the glorious future of the old ship was beginning to shape itself to their minds with prophetic force already.

The Constitution now had two frigates on her lee-quarter, and a two-decker, two more frigates, and the schooner Saucy Jane, astern.

The disappearance of the Nautilus must have astonished the English very much, as the whole affair had been managed so quietly in the night that the Belvidera, the nearest ship, had not been disturbed by the first yell, that Eaton had been unable to repress, as the Americans boarded; and the brig had forged so far ahead of all her consorts, that, at the time of boarding, she had been nearly a mile away from the nearest of them.

The wind had shifted during the night, and had brought the Constitution the advantage of the weather-gage, while, through the deceptions of the fog, Eaton found himself behind the whole English squadron, and able to look on without danger.

He had no further inclination to annoy the Belvidera, although that frigate was close enough to the schooner to have made a shot or two quite safe. Since his recapture of the girl he loved, his whole nature seemed to be transformed, and he was afraid to run into any unnecessary perils, for fear of exposing her to the danger that he had never feared for himself.

He knew well enough that if the Belvidera ever got near enough to the Constitution to fire at her, it was probable that "Old Ironsides" would give her one broadside, enough to settle her for good and all, for the Constitution carried twenty-two long twenty-four-pounder guns in each broadside, and could have pulverized the Belvidera at one blow if need be.

The enemy seemed to be aware of this; for the Belvidera was no longer the head of the fleet, after the towing had become the only means of propulsion of the ships. The Shannon, a much heavier ship, and under the command of the senior officer of the squadron, had taken the place of the Belvidera, and was drawing closer and closer to "Old Ironsides," as the kedging trick, at last discovered, was being put to practice by the British, with the advantage that they had more men and more rope to spare than could be found on any one ship.

It was now about nine in the morning, and Eaton saw that the Shannon was closing fast, and the Æolus already within gun-shot, both vessels being on the quarters of the Constitution, and the latter drawing abeam. Beyond the Æolus, and on the same side, could be perceived the spars of another frigate, that was to become mournfully famous a few weeks later, by falling an easy prey to the very ship she was now pursuing with such persistence.

This was the Guerriere, a prize taken from the French, and proudly retaining the name under which she had been captured.

This was the most anxious period of the chase, for if the enemy once succeeded in opening fire from the Shannon and Guerriere together, both of them ships of nearly the same metal, there was no telling what the result might be.

The Æolus was near enough to do it already; but her commander, knowing that his ship was only a "twelve-pounder frigate," like the Belvidera, did wisely in refraining from provoking the wrath of the grand old ship that he was hovering about.

If the Æolus had opened fire that day, a single broadside would have probably sunk that little vessel, before her consorts could get to her help, or even within gunshot.

The calm had been absolute, from the time the first breeze of sunrise had died away, and the only sound to be heard was the labored breathing of the crews in the boats, as they tugged at the oars.

The men of the Constitution were tired, and worked with much less spirit than when they had begun to tow, in the morning. With all their labor, they could not increase the gap between the pursuers and pursued; and the conviction was forcing itself on them that, if wind did not come soon, it would come too late.

But, as if to show that Providence was on the side of the stanch old ship, just as the Shannon fired her first gun, the shot of which flew past the stern of Old Ironsides, with an aim that took it within a foot of her rudder, the dark streak of a coming breeze ruffled the water, and the crew of the American frigate took advantage of it, in a way that drew, from even her opponents, more than one comment of praise.

The vessel's head was pulled round to catch the wind at the most favorable angle possible, and the sails were trimmed to take the wind as it came, to the best advantage.

It came from the quarter that had already given the Constitution the weather-gage, and

caught the frigate for at least two good minutes before it favored the English ships.

Away glided "Old Ironsides" with that puff, and drew out of gunshot with a rapidity that fairly amazed her pursuers. Every sail drew; and for the first time in twenty-four hours they "went to sleep," in nautical phrase—in other words, were full enough to keep them from flapping, as the support of the wind left them.

Then the superiority of the Constitution in sailing became apparent at once, as the English ships caught the breeze and tried to keep the relative distance that had been maintained before the wind came.

She drew ahead faster at every foot of progress, and when the little puff died away, which it did in about ten minutes, she was out of reach of the longest guns in the British squadron, and out of all immediate danger as well.

From this time till sunset, it was calm again, and the weary towing of the ships was resumed by all concerned. At seven in the evening the Constitution sounded in twenty-four fathoms, and kept at her kedging till ten. At eleven another breeze came up, and set the sails asleep once more. The boats of the gallant ship were drawn up alongside with a promptitude that showed how well the captain kept all his men in hand; and for the first time in a day of hard toil, the sailors of Old Ironsides were able to lie down on the decks and catch a little sleep.

The wind failed again at midnight; but the English captains did not order out their crews again after the hard day's work they had already had, and the hunters and hunted lay motionless on the waters all the rest of the night.

In the morning the wind arose again; but with so little force that the rate of progress of the ships was very slow. They had all got on the same tack, and were standing to the southwest, every rag of canvas hoisted and drawing, as the stately vessels urged their way through the little ripples and swells that alone disturbed the serenity of the sea.

By noon the American frigate had drawn so much ahead, that the Shannon and Belvidera, with the Guerriere, were the only ships near enough to have closed if they had had the wind to do it, and the Africa was already dipping her hull below the level of the horizon.

The schooner, Saucy Jane, was all this time drawing ahead of the whole squadron, outside of the dangerous circle within which was "Old Ironsides," and at about three o'clock in the afternoon she had got abeam of the frigate and was near enough to speak her as she passed. In those light winds the Saucy Jane could outsail any ship that ever floated, though in a heavy sea-way she would have been overmatched.

As the vessels passed within hail of each other, Eaton asked for Captain Hull. The commander's face made its appearance over the quarter rail, almost immediately, and he called out:

"Happy to see you, Mr. Eaton. What can I do for you, this morning? We are not in a condition to invite you to board us, unless you are prepared to climb the side of the ship while she's under full way; but if there is anything that does not require privacy, I am at your service, all the time. Allow me to thank you for the handsome way in which you have stuck by the ship, through all her peril. I especially admired the way in which you set that frigate to thinking that a Yankee schooner might fight a British ship, and not be so much the worse off, either. Well, sir, have you any communication to make to me?"

"I have the honor to report that I succeeded in recapturing the Nautilus, last night; but was unable to bring her away, for want of wind, sir," Eaton replied modestly. "I am also pained to report that I found, on board the brig, a wounded prisoner, Commodore Barton, of the retired list, and that he died before he could be removed to the schooner. His body is now on board this vessel, sir; and I desire to ask permission to part company with the frigate now that it is plain that there will be no further difficulty in the escape of the Constitution. I also wish to report that I was obliged to scuttle the poor little Nautilus, sir, and that she lies sunk, so that the British cannot have any sort of triumph over us about her."

Captain Hull listened attentively to the whole of this report, and when Eaton had finished, he asked:

"Have you any prisoners on board, from the Nautilus?"

"Yes, sir, the English lieutenant, Mr. Everton, and about fifteen seamen, some of them wounded. That is another reason why I am not a little anxious to go into New York; but I do not like to do so, if you think that there is any use in my remaining."

Hull waved his hand graciously.

"I am freely willing that you should go, sir, and I think that it is your plain duty now, on account of the body of the commodore. I wish you good fortune, in your home voyage, and I can promise you that I shall not forget you, in my report to the Secretary, when I go into port again."

He displayed no more concern about the still dangerously-near English squadron than if they had been so many trading schooners, now that

he had a wind to put them on an equality, and he was right, as the event proved, before that day was over.

As the Saucy Jane parted company with the frigate, a squall was seen, coming down from windward, wrapped in a dark cloud, and bringing with it any quantity of wind.

The last words that Eaton heard from the lips of the captain, as the schooner passed away, were:

"No hurrying, men, no hurrying. Plenty of time. Hands by the clew-lines and braces! Stand by to let go and furl! No hurry! I shall keep everything standing to the last minute; but I want you to work lively when you *do* work."

Then the Saucy Jane went out of hearing, and was enveloped in the embrace of the squall, from which time, till it cleared off again, in about half an hour, nothing was seen by any one on board of either party to the hunting of "Old Ironsides."

When it finally cleared away, the schooner, from her weatherly qualities, was a long way from all of the ships; but the Constitution had increased her distance from the English, till the nearest of the frigates was at least four miles off, and it was plain that there was no further hope of doing anything to complete the capture of the Yankee frigate that the English had thought their own that morning.

For the rest of the day the wind continued fair, with a smooth sea, and toward night another squall came up, under cover of which and the darkness combined, the chase of "Old Ironsides" came to an end.

When morning dawned again not one of the English vessels was in sight, and Hull proceeded on his cruise as if nothing had happened, and arrived in port at the end of the month with several prizes that he had taken; most of them, American merchantmen, recaptured.

The Saucy Jane arrived in New York harbor on the day after she left the Constitution.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONCLUSION.

THE tale of the first cruise of the Saucy Jane, Privateer, is told, and the reader can guess without much trouble that the first thing Eaton and his lady love thought of, after they had got the commodore buried, with all honors, in Trinity churchyard, was what they should do in the future.

It seemed to be too irreverent to the memory of the veteran to get married at a time like that; but there was no help for it as the matter stood.

Commodore Barton had died a poor man, and had been going out to take charge of a navy-yard in the Southern States when he had been captured in the Nautilus. His savings from his pay had been very small, as he had always lived up to the extent of his income, and it had become necessary for him to obtain active employment in order to keep his daughter from actual want.

He had no near relatives, and poor Lily had literally nowhere to go after she had seen the body deposited in the grave and paid the heavy funeral expenses.

The result of the whole matter was that, one fine morning in the middle of August, Eaton and Lily were married in the chancel of Trinity Church, with only Blair and Lady Jane present, and went off to Eaton's house, which he had left in the dress of a common sailor at the opening of the war.

He was by no means the poor man that might have appeared the case from that circumstance, for his private fortune was by no means lacking in comfort, though he was not what would have been called rich even in those times.

He had a mother living with him, who was well acquainted with Lily at the time of his first engagement, and she welcomed the fatherless girl with an affection that promised well for one mother-in-law at least, out of that sadly maligned race.

But the honeymoon could not last long for Eaton in those times. Blair, now that he was married to Lady Jane, and had settled down to the realities of life, with that very pretty but hot-tempered personage, found that he was not able to control the earl's daughter with the ease he had expected.

The two Lady Jane Blairs, married and single, were different persons altogether. The temper that had been restrained by the lover, was displayed to the husband, with a freedom that was only made more trying by the fact that the lady was very jealous, and laid all her temper to the score of her intense love for her husband. As for letting him go to sea again, that was out of the question, after Blair began to get restless and hint as much to his wife. She knew him to be a rich man, or it is probable that she would not have run away with him, for all the love she bore him. Earls' daughters are generally too well brought up to fail to understand the value of money; and in the bringing up of Lady Jane Blair, the influence of her canny old father had not been without its effect, though she had made a runaway match.

Therefore, Eaton, who had seen a good deal

of what was going on in the Blair mansion, was surprised, one day, when Blair came to him with a rueful face, to say:

"Eaton, my dear fellow, I can't go."

They had been planning a new cruise in the privateer, and it had been arranged Eaton should be second in command again, as he had been in the starting of the first voyage of the Saucy Jane. Many had been their plans of making themselves rich in a very short time by the capture of British merchant vessels, that they knew to be swarming the seas and loaded with valuable cargoes. The West Indies had proved such a place for one sort of good luck to the privateersman, on the first voyage, that he was anxious to try again, whether the luck of love in one would be followed by the luck of war in the other.

As for Eaton, he had serious need to replenish his coffers, for the income which was enough for himself and his mother, threatened to prove inadequate to take care of a wife into the bargain, without some help. As for children, when they came (as was to be expected) it was a sure thing that the husband and father would have to go to sea or make money on shore, to fill the small mouths that grow more hungry all the time.

But all these bright hopes were dashed to the ground in an instant by those words of Blair:

"Eaton, my dear fellow, I CAN'T GO."

Eaton stared at his friend, aghast.

"Not go! Why I thought it was all arranged. The schooner is in the best possible trim, and I got the new men out of a lot of men-of-war's-men, just come in from the President."

Blair ground his teeth in the bitterness of his disappointment, but he managed to say, after a pause to control his feelings:

"That's all right, and there is nothing to prevent your going. But that is not what is the matter. It is I that cannot go. *She won't let me!* Swears that she will die if I go, and all that sort of thing, you know. I say, Eaton, does your wife go on so?"

Eaton smiled and shook his head.

Blair considered a minute before he answered:

"Ah, yes; that is because she doesn't love you, Jane says. I tell you what it is, Eaton, it's a terrible hard thing to have a wife so fond of you that she won't let you have a little fun, for fear you might go and fall in love with some other woman. Jenny is getting a perfect termagant, and the worst of it is that she won't give me a chance to get mad and leave the house, for it is perfectly plain that she loves me to distraction, and a man can't find it in his heart to be harsh to a woman who loves him; can he, now?"

Eaton made no answer, for it was plain that none was required, and Blair continued without noticing his silence:

"You don't know what a trying thing it is to have married an earl's daughter, and to be at war with the country from which she comes. I hardly tell her any good news for our side, for fear that she will burst out crying and tell me I am a brute, and that I brought her away from a comfortable home, to make her miserable by insulting her. I swear I don't know what to do sometimes; but this she made me promise this morning that I would not go out on this voyage, but send you in command. So, old fellow, I wish you joy of your luck, and all I stipulate is that you shall take the revenge on the Johnny Bulls that I should have taken if I had been able to go."

Eaton, though he was rather disappointed at the prospective absence of Blair, whom he had grown to like and esteem very highly, was sensible that the proposed arrangement was one that would be very advantageous to himself, on account of the opportunity it would give him to perfect the re-habilitation of his name, for which he was working, and possible aid in securing a reversal, by the omnipotent Congress, of the unjust sentence under which he had so long suffered.

It was, therefore, with but a semblance of sorrow for the loss of his commander's society, that he consented to the arrangement and took his departure the next week in the schooner on a new cruise in search of any prizes that might fall in his way. How he succeeded in his expedition is a story too long to be told at this page of a book that has already lasted long enough.

When the Saucy Jane again struck the port of New York, he had taken enough prizes from the British to make the owner of the Saucy Jane a rich man for the rest of his days, and his own share of the proceeds of the voyage, when reduced to gold and silver, filled a chest that would not go under an ordinary chair.

What became of him in the interim, and what were his adventures, as also how he met "Old Ironsides" again and how he became witness of her most famous victory over the Java, will be told some day by the author of these lines, who here takes his most respectful leave of the reader, and bids him "God-speed."

THE END.

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